

Dr. Stillingfleet's
ANSWER
J. S's Catholick Letters.

H. M. A. R. in Christo, P. D.
Wilhelmus Archiep. Cantuariensis
a Sacris

Imprimatur,

Jan. 5.
1687. *Liber cui Titulus, A Discourse*
Concerning the Nature
and Grounds of the Cer-
tainty of Faith, &c. &c.

H. Maurice, *R^{mo} in Christo, P. D.*
Wilhelmo Archiep. Cantuariensi,
a Sacris.

4

A
DISCOURSE
Concerning the
Nature and Grounds
OF THE
CERTAINTY
OF
FAITH,
IN
ANSWER
To J. S. his *Catholick* Letters.

By EDW. STILLINGFLEET, D.D.
Dean of St. Pauls.

L O N D O N,
Printed for Henry Mortlock, at the *Phœnix* in St. Paul's
Church-Yard, 'MDC LXXX VIII.

A
DISCOURSE

Concerning the

Practice and Obedience

OF THE

CERTAINTY

OF

FALTH

IN

ANSWER

To J. S. his Catholick Letter.

By E. W. STILLINGFLEET, D.D.
Dean of St. Pauls

L O N D O N:
Printed for Henry Morlock, at the Printer in St. Pauls
Church-Yard, MDCCLXXVIII.

THE CONTENTS.

	Page
T he Title of Catholick Letters Examind	1
How J. S. comes to be concerned in this Debate	3
His Doctrine denied to be Catholick by the Sorbon Doctors and others	5
His Self-Contradiction about it in seven Particulars	7
The State of the present Controversie, about the Certainty of Faith	15
How it is altered by J. S.	25
Of the Certainty of Particular Points of Faith	27
The Grounds of the Certainty of Faith laid down by the General Consent of the School-Divines	31
J. S.'s main Argument against our Certainty of Faith Answer'd and Retorted	34
	An

Contents.

	Page
<i>An Evident Proof of the Certainty of Faith without Infallibility</i>	37
<i>The Notion of a Rule of Faith Explained</i>	38
<i>The Sense of Tradition may be mistaken as well as Scripture</i>	42
<i>The Instances of it defended</i>	44
<i>The Second Argument, about Fallible Certainty, Answer'd.</i>	49
<i>The Third, about our Rule of Faith, being common to all Heresies, Answer'd</i>	50
<i>The Fourth, about making our Private Judgment our Rule, Answer'd</i>	53
<i>The Fifth, about Judgment of Discretion Consider'd and Answer'd</i>	54
<i>How far the Scripture is a Rule to our People</i>	55
<i>What Certainty they have as to things necessary to Salvation</i>	58
<i>What Judgment of Discretion allowed by him</i>	62
<i>That it doth not serve only to find an Infallible Authority proved at large</i>	64
<i>His severe Conclusion of his Third Letter Answer'd</i>	69
<i>The Answer to the Argument summ'd up</i>	71
<i>The Sixth Argument about the Apostles not using a Written Rule in their Preaching, Answer'd</i>	73
<i>The</i>	

Contents.

	Page
<i>The Seventh, about Points necessary to Salvation,</i>	
10 <i>Answer'd</i>	74
<i>The Similitude of the Purse defended</i>	76
<i>Scripture owned to be a Rule of Faith (though</i>	
10 <i>not complete) by the Divines of the Church of</i>	
10 <i>Rome</i>	78
<i>And that all Points simply necessary are therein</i>	
<i>contained</i>	81
<i>J. S. his Concession that all Points are not neces-</i>	
<i>sary to all Persons</i>	83
<i>Some Mens Uncertainty overthrows not the Cer-</i>	
<i>tainty of Others</i>	85
<i>The Eighth Argument about the Certainty of the</i>	
<i>Letter of Scripture</i>	86
<i>J. S. overthrows it, by allowing it to be corrected</i>	
<i>by the Sense of the Faithful</i>	87
<i>The Grounds of our Certainty laid down</i>	89
<i>Of Human and Divine Faith</i>	91
<i>The Last Argument, about the Number of Cano-</i>	
<i>nical Books, Answer'd</i>	92
<i>No Books of the New Testament lost</i>	93
<i>How the Canon was entire in the First Ages</i>	95
<i>Of the Universal Consent of all Christian Churches</i>	97
<i>The Demonstration for Oral Tradition laid down</i>	
	100
<i>The</i>	

Contents.

	Page
<i>The Instance of the Greek Church not Answer'd</i>	101
<i>The Argument it self consider'd</i>	104
<i>A clear and distinct Answer given to it, and its notorious Fallacy laid open</i>	105
<i>How Errors might come into the Church</i>	109
<i>The late Instance of Molinos produced</i>	109, 110
<i>Many other Causes of Errors besides Forgetful- ness and Malice set down</i>	ibid.
<i>The Charge of Pelagianism defended against J. S.</i>	113
<i>Of the Council of Trents Proceeding on Tradi- tion</i>	115
<i>The Proof that it did not, referr'd to another Di- scourse</i>	116

E R R A T A.

Page 16. line 9. for as Mr. G. read as Mr. S. p. 32.
 Marg. for 9. 6. times, 1. 7. for 19. 9. 11, 12. p. 104.
 Marg. l. 9. for the 2^d. 19. 1. 11. 10. p. 62. l. 23. off and
 how far, and. p. 105. l. 15. blot out not before really, l.
 16. add not after are.

A DISCOURSE

Concerning the
NATURE & GROUNDS

OF THE
CERTAINTY

OF
FAITH, &c.

WHEN I published my Two Letters to Mr. G. I had *good Reason* to expect an Answer from him, who began the Controversie. But it seems he had *better Reason* to forbear (and it is not hard to guess at it) and I am turned over to one, who pretends to write *Catholick Letters* against me. I have a great and just Reverence for some *Catholick Epistles*, and be-

lieve them written by an *Infallible Spirit* ; but for these *Catholick Letters*, though their whole design be *Infallibility*, yet I cannot find so much as a fair *Probability* in them. But why must these be call'd *Catholick Letters* ? Are they written by some *Catholick Bishop*, to give an Account of his Faith, according to the Custom of the Antient Church ? Is it, that the Doctrine contained in them is undoubtedly *Catholick* ? So far from it, that I shall make it appear, that no one Church of the *Christian World* ever own'd it. But, suppose, it had been the Doctrine of the *Roman Church*, how could this make them *Catholick Letters*, unless so great a *Logician* had first proved, that a Part may assume the *Denomination* of the whole ? But then, why not, *Roman Catholick Letters* according to the new Style ? There was a Reason for this. *J. S.* hath not forgotten, how hardly he had lately escaped Censure at *Rome*, for the Principles contained in them ; and therefore though he hopes they may pass for *Catholick* here, yet he durst not joyn *Roman* to *Catholick* in the Title of his Letters.

But how comes *J. S.* to be concerned in this Controversie with *Mr. G.* ? The Account he gives of it in the beginning of his *First Letter* is very pleasant. He saith, *He accepted a Commission from Mr. G. to hold his Cards, while he is not in Circumstances to play out his Game himself.* I will not examine *Mr. G's. Circumstances*, nor the *Game he plays at* ; but methinks, this is no very decent way of expressing the undertaking a Debate about *Matters of Faith and Salvation*. But in Truth, he makes the business of *Infallibility*, as he handles it, to be a Matter of Sport and Diversion ; notwithstanding all his *Grimaces* and *Tragical Expressions* about it. It is hard to be severe upon a Metaphor ; but, suppose it be allowed ; yet I wonder, of all Men,
he

he should pitch upon *J. S.* to hold his Cards for him, who had plaid his own so ill, and so much to the dissatisfaction of the leading Men of his own Church. Yet he now appears as brisk and confident, as if he were some *New Gamester*; although he produces his *old sullied Cards*, (a little wiped) over again; and seems to have forgotten the Answer to his *Sure Footing*, and the Account he still owes to the World for it. I know not, how far it agrees with the Laws of *Ecclesiastical Chivalry*, for one, who hath not defended himself, to appear a Champion for another, especially in the same Cause; but there is no great Reason to apprehend he should do much for another, who hath done next to nothing for himself.

The main Subject of the Debate is, about the *Nature and Grounds of the Certainty of Faith*; and the Method I think most natural and effectual to proceed in, is,

I. To shew how unfit *J. S.* of all Men, is to undertake this Cause.

II. To settle the true State of the Controversie between us.

III. To examine the Reasons he produces against our Grounds of Certainty.

IV. To lay open the weakness of his Arguments, on behalf of the Infallibility of *Oral and Practical Tradition*.

I. As to *J. S.* his appearing in this Cause again, we are to consider, that in his *Catholick Letters*, he frequently owns *Faith vindicated, Reason against Rallery, and Error nonplust*; and even *Sure Footing* it self. But I shall now shew, that he disowned the main Principles in those Books, when he was in great danger

of being Censured at Rome for them ; and therefore is not to be allow'd to produce them again. The Account of this Matter will give great Light into the state of the present *Controversie*, and is therefore necessary to be premised to it.

Out of those Books of J. S. a considerable Person in the Church of Rome, selected three *Propositions* about the Grounds of his *Infallible Certainty*, which were these ;

Faith vindicated,
pag. 13.

I. *That he who is obliged to profess Faith propositions true, must see the Connexion between their Terms, and consequently, that they cannot be unconnected, or false.*

Faith vindicated,
pag. 41.

II. *If the two Terms be not seen to be connected, these Propositions may, nay ought to be denied by the Respondent, whose Office and Right it is to grant nothing but what is evident, lest he ensnare himself.*

Error Nonplust,
pag. 135.

III. *'Tis requisite and necessary, that the Assent of Faith in divers particular Believers be formally Infallible, or that those Persons be infallibly certain by evident Reasons, that the Authority or Rule of Faith they rely on, cannot herein deceive them. Else great Wits, and acute Reflecters, whose piercing Understandings require convictive Grounds for their Faith, would remain for ever unsatisfied : nor would the wisest Christians sincerely and heartily assent to, nor with honesty profess the Truth of their Faith, nor could any prove it true, or establish rational doubters in it, or convert Men of exact knowledge to it, or convince Hereticks, calling the Truth of it in question. Nor could Governors and leading Persons with any Conscience or Credit propose and preach the Truth of Faith to the Generality.*

These

These Propositions were tender'd to two Doctors of the Sorbon, who declared, *The First could not be explained in a Catholick Sense*; and therefore very unfit for Catholick Letters. For if (say they) a Person sees the Connexion between the Terms, it would be Science, and not Faith; it is enough to see them not to be contradictory, or that the Connexion is not repugnant to Reason. Divine Faith is above, not contrary to Reason.

Heref.
Blakian.
P. 37, 38.

As to the Second, they agreed, *That neither could that be explained in a Catholick Sense, because it is destructive of Faith, and a Proposition ought not, cannot be denied, although the Respondent hath not Evidence of the Terms of which it consists; when he otherwise knows the Church (which Faith [not Demonstration] teaches to be Infallible in Matters of Faith) to propose as a Truth revealed by God.*

To the Third, they say, *That it cannot be explained in a Catholick Sense: Because it is sufficient that the Church be believed by Faith to be Infallible, and it is not requisite that the Infallibility of the Church be proved by evident Reason.*

See here the main Design of his Catholick Letters declared to be no Catholick Doctrine; which is to prove that there must be Infallible Certainty by Conclusive Evidence of the Churches Infallibility. And if this be not Catholick Doctrine, I am infallibly certain his Letters are far from being Catholick in their Sense.

One of these Doctors writes to the A. B. of D. *That the Natural Sense of the Propositions could not be Catholick; and that all Bishops were bound to suppress this Doctrine, lest it did mischief to the Flock of Christ. And that the A. B. of Paris would revoke his Licence, if the Author did not retract them, as he hoped he would.* P. 39.

What?

What ? Retract the Substance of his *Catholick Letters* ? Is this possible ? And yet again publish the same Doctrine as *Catholick* ! This is indeed very *surprising*. But so it was. For the A. B. of D. avers, That J. S.

- P. 39. *confessed the Propositions to be Heretical, yea very Heretical ; but he said, they were not taken in his sense ; which the other said, was a ridiculous Plea.* He granted, that
- P. 40. *J. S. might contradict himself, but there was no colour for saying the Propositions were not taken in their true*
- P. 42. *sense. And Mr. S. being requir'd by the A. B. of Paris to Anathematize these Propositions, and to subscribe to the Censure that they could not be explained in a Catholick Sense ; he did it.* And yet the sense of them is maintained by him in his *Catholick Letters*. Is not such a Man fit to hold the Cards for Mr. G. ? who makes the same Doctrine to be *Heretical* and *Catholick*, as his Circumstances require. And in his own Language, he
- P. 44. *goes backwards and forwards, blows and suys, declares for and against the same Principles.*
- Third Letter, p. 65.*

Append. ad Hæres. Blakloan. This Doctrine of J. S. was complained of at Rome, and a Congregation of Cardinals was appointed to Examine it, and they sent their Instructions about it to the Popes Nuncio at Paris, where J. S. then was. And therein they took notice, that in his *Vindication* sent to them, he detested that Doctrine as *Heretical*, viz. that the Evidence of the Connexion of Predicate and Subject, and the Evidence of the Rule of Faith by which the Believer may be infallibly certain he cannot be deceived, is necessary in order to Faith. I desire the Reader to mark this Declaration which J. S. sent to Rome, and to compare it with the Doctrine of his *Catholick Letters* : But of that hereafter.

But it is worth our while to shew with what a double Face J. S. appeared in his *Vindication* and *Complaint*, sent to Rome, and in his Books which he published here.

And

And by that, the Reader may judge of the *Catholic* Sincerity of the Writer of these Letters.

I. About the *Faith* he designs to demonstrate.

Faith Vindicated, Preface.

I declare then, that my chief End in this Treatise, is to settle Christian Faith, or to demonstrate, that it must be truly or absolutely certain, and that my applying it now and then to my Opposers, is only a Secondary Intention, and meerly Occasional.

Querimonia advers. Lominum. p. 49.

He saith, He speaks not of Faith in itself, but as it is controverted among us.

The same he affirms p. 145, 146. that he meddles not with Faith, but with respect to his Adversaries; or as it is disputed between Catholics and those he calls Hereticks, p. 148.

If it were his design to settle *Christian Faith*, and to make it truly and absolutely certain, and only secondarily applying it to his Opposers; how is it possible that at the same time, he should not meddle with *Faith in itself*, but meerly with respect to his Opposers? Is not this a brave Undertaker, to make *Faith* infallibly certain, who so evidently contradicts himself as to his own design? But it seems, to us he must pretend to make *Faith* certain in itself; but at *Rome*, he meant no more by it, but only to perplex and confound us. As though his Demonstrations were only intended for a sort of *Metaphysical Traps* to catch Hereticks with. But we are glad to see by his own Confession, that *Faith in itself* is not made absolutely Certain by them.

II. About

II. About the Objects of Faith, and the Evidence of them.

Reason against Raillery,
pag. 55.

The strangest and wisest Souls are unapt to assent but upon Evidence : Hence, unless such Men see Proofs absolutely concluding those Points true, they are unapt to be drawn to yield to them, and embrace them as certain Truths — Nothing can rationally subdue the Faculty of suspending, in such Men at least, but True Evidence had from the Object working this clear sight in them, either by itself, or by Effects or Causes necessarily connected with it. Other Evidences I know none.

Faith Vindicated, p. 12, 13.

The Truth of Propositions of Faith consists in the Connexion of those Notions which make the Subject and Predicate. Whoever therefore sees not the Connexion between those Notions in the Principle of Faith, sees not

In his Declaration sent to Rome, p. 11, 13. he not only expressed his Assent to these Propositions, but That the contrary to them were False, Destructive of Faith, and Heretical, viz.

I. That the Objects of Faith are not to be evident or demonstrable by Natural Reasons in order to believing them.

II. That in order to the believing such Objects of Faith, conveyed down to us, either by Scripture or Tradition, it is not necessary to know evidently the Connexion of Predicate and Subject, but it is suffi-

the Truth of any of those Propositions --- It follows, that he who is obliged to profess Faith-Propositions true, must see the Connexion between those Terms. sufficient if they be proposed by the Catholic Church.

Now let any Man try how he can reconcile these things ; (1) Nothing can subdue rationally the Faculty of suspending but true Evidence had from the Object ; and yet it is destructive to Faith, and Heretical to say, that the Objects of Faith are demonstrable by natural Reasons, in order to believing them. Is not true Evidence from the Object a natural Reason in order to believing ? (2) He that sees not the Connexion between Predicate and Subject, sees not the Truth of Faith-propositions ; and he who is obliged to profess them, must see it ; and yet, in order to believing Objects of Faith, it is not necessary to see it, nay it is Heretical to assert it.

III. About Infallible Assent.

Reason against Raillery,

p. 113.

'Tis most evident therefore and demonstrable, that there is no Certainty, but where there is Infallibility ; and that we can never be said to be truly certain of anything, till, all Circumstances consider'd, we see ourselves out of possibility of being deceived hic & nunc in that very thing.

In his Declaration, p. 11, 13. he owns this Proposition to be True, and the contrary to be Heretical, viz.

That it is not necessary, in order to believing the Objects of Faith, that he that believes, should know evidently his Assent to be Supernatural and Infallible.

C

But

But if there can be no Certainty of Faith, till we see ourselves out of possibility of being deceived, I should think it very hard to say it was Heretical to assert it was necessary for him that believes to know his Assent to be Infallible. For what difference is there between knowing we cannot be deceived in our Assent, and that it is Infallible? But here he will hope to escape, by joyning *Supernatural* to *Infallible*; and so he over-reached the Cardinals by putting those together; for his is nothing but a *pure Natural Infallibility*.

IV. About the Mediums of Faith used by him.

Sure footing, p. 172.

He rejects *Extrinfecal Mediums* as insufficient, and requires *Intrinfecal*.

Faith Vindicated, Preface, at the end.

He owns his Discourses to be built on *Intrinfecal Mediums*.

Errour Nonplust, p. 169.

He requires clear Evidence from the Object, to ground a firm Assent.

Page. 170, 171.

He makes it necessary to true Certainty, that it be taken from the Thing or Object. And true Certainty (he saith) is built on the Things being as it is, and nothing can ever be truly known to be otherwise than it is.

In his Subscription to the Instructions from Rome, p. 12. he denies that he spake of *Intrinfecal Requisites* to Faith; but only of *Extrinfecal*. And this he goes about to prove against his own plain Words, in his Declaration, Sect. 3. pag. 34, &c.

How can *Intrinsic* Mediums, and Evidence from the Object, be only *Extrinsic* Pre-requisites?

V. About *Human* and *Divine Faith*.

Faith Vindicated, p. 73. *Divine Faith* ought to have a far greater degree of Firmness in it, than any *Human Faith* whatsoever: Wherefore since *Human Faith* can rise to that degree of Stability—*Divine Faith* being *Supernatural*, ought to be more firmly grounded; and consequently more highly impossible to be false.

Errour Nonplust, p. 143.

He speaks expressly of *Divine Faith*.

What Evidence can there be like a Man's plain Words? Is not that *Divine Faith* which he goes about to demonstrate the *Infallible Certainty* of? It seems we are all this while to seek for the Certainty of Faith *formally Divine*; and all this mighty Noise about the Necessity of *Infallibility*, reaches no farther than a *Faith formally Human*. And yet J. S. affirms that he undertook to prove the impossibility of Falshood in *Divine* and *Supernatural Faith*. And so it seems *Divine* and *Supernatural Faith* must derive its *Infallible Certainty* from a meer *Natural Infallibility*. Or if it be but *Human Faith* he means, then he falls short of what he

In his *Vindication*, p. 97. He saith, It is Evident that he spake of Faith, *formally as Human*, and not as *formally Divine*.

promised, which was to shew the *Infallible Certainty of Divine Faith*. And thus the *Trap-Maker* is catch'd himself.

VI. About particular Points of Faith.

Errour Nonplust. p. 161.

I thought he had meant Certainty of the Points of his Faith. What we are then in Reason to expect from Dr. St. is, that he would bring us Grounds for the Certainty of his Faith, as to determinate Points, viz. Christ's Godhead, a Trinity, &c.

Reason against Raillery, p. 167.

Seeing then Christians are bound to profess their Faith true, as to those Points of a Trinity for Example, or Incarnation, &c. it follows, that it must be affirm'd and held that a Trinity or Incarnation absolutely is, and consequently, that it is impossible not to be.

Declaration, p. 50.

He peremptorily asserts (and challenges his Adversaries to shew the contrary) that he produced not one Argument to prove any Points of Doctrine to be Divine, or Supernatural; but only, that such a Doctrine was delivered by Christ or his Apostles. And this he frequently insists upon, and is the main of his Defence.

But why then doth he urge us to produce our Grounds of Certainty as to particular Points, if himself doth not? If he pretends no more than to prove them in general, why may not we be allowed to do the same? He that calls upon others to do it, in such an insulting manner, is presumed to do it himself, and if he doth not, he only *banters* and abuses his Reader. And after
all

all this mighty pretence to *Demonstration and Infallibility*, the whole Dispute comes to this, whether Men may attain to greater Certainty of *Christ's Doctrine* by *Oral and Practical Traditions* than we can do by *Scripture, Reason and Tradition*? But this is against his words, where he saith, *Seeing then Christians are bound to profess their Faith true, as to those Points of a Trinity, for Example, or Incarnation, &c. it follows, that it must be affirm'd and held that a Trinity or Incarnation absolutely is, and consequently, that it is impossible not to be.*

VII. About Moral Certainty.

His whole Book called *Faith vindicated* was written against it. And in the Preface to it, p. 3. he opposes *absolute Certainty to Moral*; and he saith, *those who have it not, have no true Faith.*

Page 17.

True Faith by reason of its immoveable Grounds, can bear an asserting the absolute Impossibility of its falshood. And without this, he makes Faith absurd, preternatural and irrational.

Page 34.

Moral Certainty is in reality uncertainty; and the highest degree of Moral Certainty is the lowest

When I read in *Lominus*, pag. 43. that *J.S.* in his *Vindication* pleaded, that he required no more than *Moral Evidence for the Assent and Profession of Faith*, I could hardly believe him; and therefore I was earnest to see what he would say in Answer to this; but even there, pag. 23. he owns it, and saith expressly, *That Moral Evidence is absolutely*

degree of Uncertainty, truly so called.

The same he asserts, pag. 36, 86, 93.

Error Nonplust. pag. 195.

Fallible Certainty destroys all Efficacy, all Defence, and even Essence of Faith.

absolutely sufficient to Faith : But withal he saith, There is more than Moral Evidence in Tradition.

Let now any indifferent Person compare those Assertions together : If *Moral Certainty* be *Uncertainty*, and destroy the *Essence of Faith*, how can it be *absolutely sufficient to Faith* ? But besides the *Contradiction* ; he hath by this one Assertion overthrown the whole Design of his *Catholick Letters*. For, if *true Faith* may be had without *Infallible Certainty*, what need any such contending about it ? For the Ground of the Dispute is about such *Faith* as is *necessary to Salvation* ; and if *true Faith*, as J. S. grants, which is necessary to Salvation, may be had without their pretended *Infallibility* ; there is no Colour left for pressing Persons of our Communion to forsake our Church, because we cannot have *Infallible Certainty of Faith*, when themselves grant that we may be saved without it. And what *Sincerity* is to be expected from such a Man, who makes such out-cries upon us, for want of *Infallible Certainty* for Faith, when himself Confesses, that *Moral Certainty is sufficient to Faith* ? what ever becomes of *Moral Certainty*, I love *Moral Honesty* ; and I cannot see how it is consistent with it, to make such mighty pretences to the Necessity of *Infallible Certainty* for Faith, even in his *Catholick Letters* (which seems to be the chief Design of them,) when him-

himself had declared to the Cardinals at *Rome*, that less than that is sufficient for true Faith. But the secret of it is, he knows well enough, there is no such Necessity for *Infalible Certainty*; and when it will bring him off, he can own it; but among us *Hereticks*, they must *bluster* and make a mighty noise about it; because it startles weak and injudicious People; and they find nothing so apt to terrifie and confound them like *Infallibility*; which like a *Flash of Lightning* doth not help them to see better, but strikes them down with Horror and Astonishment.

And here I might fairly stop and send the Reader to *J. S.* for an effectual Answer to his own *Letters*; or at least to shew; how very unfit he was after such going forward, and backwards in this matter, to undertake this Cause.

2. But lest I should seem to decline any thing which may seem material, I shall now proceed to *state* the *Controversie*, as it lies between Mr. S. and me. For, what concerns another Person, I shall leave it to himself, as not standing in need of any Assistance from me.

The *Occasion* of the Conference was set down by Mr. M. to have been, *That Mr. G. affirmed in some Companies, that no Protestant could shew any Ground of Absolute Certainty for their Faith; and that Mr. S. had promised him, that if I were not able to manifest the contrary, he would forsake our Communion.*

So that Mr. G. was the *Aggressor* by laying this charge upon us, *That we could shew no Ground of Absolute Certainty for our Faith.* And therefore when in the Conference I assigned the Scripture for the Ground and Rule of our Faith, and universal Tradition for the Proof of the Books of Scripture, I had Reason in my *Expostulatory Letter* to Mr. G., to desire of him to shew, "That we have no absolute Certainty of the
"Rule

“Rule of our Faith, viz. the Scripture, although we
 “have a larger and firmer Tradition for it, than
 “you can have for the Points in difference between
 “us.

First Letter,
 pag. 4.
 5, 6.

This plainly relates to the *Conference, wherein Scripture was own'd to be our Rule, and Universal Tradition, the Evidence on which we receive the Books.* And to any Man of Sense, this is not *Shifting and Tricking off the Proof to Mr. G.* as Mr. G. often calls it; but it is a plain and evident Proof of our *Certainty* upon their own Grounds. For, if *Tradition* be such a Ground of *Absolute Certainty*, as they assert, and we have a *larger and firmer Tradition for Scripture, than they can produce for the Points of Faith in difference between us*; then it is evident we must have, upon their own Principles, a Ground of *Absolute Certainty* for our *Faith*; which was the main Point of the Conference.

If he will Answer the Argument, he must either deny *that we have Universal Tradition for the Books of Scripture*, or that *Universal Tradition* is a Ground for the *Absolute Certainty* of *Faith*? Either of these ways he had said something to the purpose; but he found this way of Reasoning too hot for him; and therefore, he calls it *Shifting and Tricking off the Proof to Mr. G.* and so falls into a *Tragical Declamation* against *my not proving, and making a Secret of the Ground of our Certainty*; as if a Man intended to make a *Secret* of a Horse he had lost, when he published his *Marks* in the *Gazett*. Here is the *Ground of our Certainty* laid down in that very place, where he saith, *I shift off the Proof to Mr. G.* but alas for him! He cannot see any thing like a *Proof*, unless it be serv'd up, with all its due formalities of *Major, Minor and Conclusion*. Must I be forced to tell him, as the Painters did by ill Pictures, *This is a Horse, and this*

this a Wolf? This is an *Argument*, and this an *Answer*? It is a hard Case if a Man cannot understand Reason, unless like *Scaliger's* Jest, against *Cardan*, there be something in the Margin to direct where they are to be found. All Men of Sense understand the force of an *Argument*, though it be not dressed up after the way of the *Schools*; and to tie Men up to those Methods of *Reasoning* in our Age in Books of Controversie, is like *Trummelling* a Horse, when he is to go a Journey; it might do well to teach him to pace, but it would be ridiculous, when he is upon Service.

Upon this he runs out into a very Eloquent piece of Trifling, making sad Moans and Complaints with many Exaggerations, and great variety of Phrases. *As if I offer'd no kind of Certainty to Mens Souls, but only that I bid those that doubt prove the contrary*; and so brings notable parallels of *Peters having twenty pounds in his Purse*; because *Paul cannot prove he hath it not*; or *his having the more Title to an Estate*, because an *Adversary may have the ill luck to be Nonsuited*. I know not how Mr. G. will take these things; for they do not seem much to his Advantage. If I were as he, I would never trust him to play my Cards more; for what means this insinuation of *Nonsuiting*, &c? But Mr. S. is plainly mistaken, for the force of it doth not depend upon his bare *Nonsuiting*; but upon the *Goodness* of the *Deeds*, and the *Strength* of the *Evidence*, which himself relied upon, and appear much stronger for us than for him.

It is not *Pauls not proving*, but *Peters producing the twenty pounds*, and laying it before him, which is the *Argument* to prove he hath it. Suppose he did not produce it *in Specie*, but shewed good *Security* for it, such as *Paul* could not deny, had he not reason to be-

lieve he was owner of it? There being so little colour in the Reasoning Part, I pass over the Declamatory, as fitter for the School at the Savoy, than a Writer of Controversies.

But here comes in, among his Flowers, a very notable Point of Divinity. *Truth is therefore Truth, because it is built on Intrinsic Grounds which prove it to be such; and not on private Mens Abilities, or their saying this or that.* This latter is undoubtedly true, and is universally believed, since the School of Pythagoras was broken up: Wherefore till those Grounds be produced, it cannot be with Reason held Truth. This is great; and becoming the Scientific J. S. But will he hold to this? Will he own it to the Cardinals of the Inquisition? I find a certain Gentleman with the very same Letters, J. S. writing two whole Sections, where-

Decla-
ratio J. S. in he denies
circa Do-
ctrinam in suis libris con-
tentam; exhibita Sacrae
Congregationi Eccles.
& R. D. D. Cardinali-
um General. Inquisito-
rum. Duaci. 1677.

that ever he meddled with Intrinsic Mediums, or that it was possible that he should. But P. T. was then living, and followed him close at Rome; now that fright is over, out come *Intrinsic Grounds* again; and *no Man can hold any thing as Truth, till those Grounds be produced.* Suppose a Man assents to the Doctrine of Faith, as *True and Divine* on meerly *Extrinsic Grounds*, or *Motives of Credibility*; hath this Man *true Faith* or not? Is he bound to hold and profess it to be true, though he doth not see the *Intrinsic Grounds which prove Truth to be Truth*? Doth that Man sin, who professes to believe a thing to be true, though he doth not see the *Intrinsic Grounds* for it? What kind of sin is it, *Mortal*, or *Venial*? How far may a Man safely deny that which he cannot with Reason hold to be true? How many thousand Martyrs Lives, might this Doctrine have saved in the

the Primitive Times? How might the poor Innocent Christians have pleaded for themselves; "That they could see no *Intrinsic Grounds*, which made *Truth* to be *Truth*; and they understood from a deep *Divine*, that *still those Grounds be produced*, it cannot with *Reason be held Truth*; and if it cannot with Reason be held, it may surely in our very hard Circumstances, with Reason, be denied, or at least concealed and dissembled. There seems to be more danger in professing the Faith without it; than in not owning it, being not able to produce *Intrinsic Grounds* for it. And these are far above our reach and capacity; and if it cannot with Reason be held *Truth* without it, it seems very unreasonable to require us to dye for it.

What saith J. S. to the Case of the Jews, who heard our Saviours Doctrine, and saw his Miracles, did they sin in their Infidelity or not? It will be very hard for him prove, that they saw *Intrinsic Grounds* for what they were required to believe; and yet our Saviour charges them with very great Sin in their Infidelity. John 15. I hope Mr. S. will not answer me, about these things, as he did some in the Conference at Paris, with, *Tace, Tace, interrumpis & confundis me.* This very Instance of the Jews was then brought against him by Dr. Hares. Blokloan. pag. 315, 316, 317. But A. B. of D. then urged, That if they had such Evidence, they could not have inward Unbelief, nor call in Question the Truth or Divinity of Christ and his Miracles. To which J. S. replied, *Tace, nolo vibi Respondere.* I hope he is better provided of an Answer now, and that he will shew, wherein the sin of the Jews lay, who did not profess Christ's Doctrine to be true, because they could not produce

duce any Intrinsic Grounds for the Truth of it.

Page 6. But to return to our first Controversie, About the Certainty of Faith to be proved by us. He tells me, that I know well enough, that to prove Protestants have no Absolute Certainty of their Faith is no hard Task even for a weak Man; I know, he saith, that any Man may find it confessed to his hands by Protestants; and in the Margin he cites, Dr. Tillotsons Rule of Faith, pag. 117, 118. I wonder at Mr. S's. Courage, that he dares mention that Book, to which he hath so many years been indebted for an Answer, and what he hath offer'd towards it in *Faith Vindicated, and Reason against Rallery*, he hath again retracted as to the main Principles of them, for fear of a Censure at Rome; and which he advanced out of opposition to those of that Book which he quotes here. So that J. S. by disowning those Principles of his, hath justified Dr. T. and hath overthrown the Absolute Certainty of his own Faith. For I have already proved from his own words, That he owns Moral Evidence to be absolutely sufficient for Faith; and yet this is the very thing from whence he proves that Protestants have confessed that they have no Absolute Certainty of their Faith.

But if this Matter were to be decided by the Confession of Parties, what thinks he of those of the Church of Rome, who have charged his Doctrine about Infallible Certainty, with downright Heresie and Impiety, and that it leads to Atheism and Infidelity, and overthrows the Christian Faith? This we are told is the sense of all the Learned and Orthodox Men of your Church. Let the Reader judge what J. S. hath gotten by the Confession of Parties.

Hæref.
Blackloan.
p. 33. 153.
&c. 223.

Hæc nova
propositio
fidem
Christianam de-

fruit impellitque ad Scepticismum & Atheismum. Hæref. Blacklo. p. 66.

Mecum omnes viri Docti & Orthodoxi sentiunt, per tua principia vastum ad Atheismum & Hæresin hiatum aperiri. Hæref. Blackloan, p. 200.

I hope now we shall come to the *State* of the *Question*; for he charges me with perverting it: *The First Question* (he saith) *at the Conference, was, Whether Protestants are absolutely Certain, that they hold now the same Tenets in Faith and all that our Saviour taught to his Apostles.* And my Answer, he saith, was, *They are.*

By his favour, my Answer was not in those words, "but that we are absolutely certain that we now hold all the same Doctrine that was taught by Christ and his Apostles. And for a certain Reason, I desire my own Words may express my Mind; for I do not find *Oral Tradition Infallible*; and where Words are varied, the Sense may be so too.

But he observes, *that I trick it off again*, as he calls it, (I suppose it is Gamesters Language,) *from the Point of Absolute Certainty of Faith, to Absolute Certainty of the Rule of Faith, viz. the Scripture; but our Saviour and Protestants believe more than that the Book so called, is Scripture. Is Certainty of this more, and Certainty of this Book, all one? Here is then an enquiry after one thing, plainly turned off to another.* It seems Mr. G. is quite gone for a Gamester; for he discerned *no Tricking* in this matter, nor can I. It is very true, we do believe *no More*, than that the Book so called is *Scripture*; for we believe *All* the Matters of Faith contained in that Book. And what then? If by his *More*, he means Articles of Faith not contained in Scripture; then I tell him plainly, we believe *no More*. And therefore when Mr. G. put his next Question, as he thought very pertinently, *By what Certain Rule do you hold it?* My Answer was, *By the Divine Revelation contained in the Writings of the New Testament*: Whereby I excluded his *More*, if it be not contained in Scripture. But if by *More*, he means our Assent to the Points of Faith contained in Scripture,

I shall give a full Answer to it afterwards. Then he asked, *By what Certain Rule do you know that the New Testament, which we now have, does contain all the Divine Revelations of Christ and his Apostles?* And if he puts such Questions concerning the Rule, What *Tricking* was it in me, to give a direct Answer to them? How did I *turn off the Enquiry from one thing to another*, when I only Answered the Questions he proposed? This is not *playing Mr. G's Cards*, but condemning him for *playing unskilfully*; and desiring to begin a *new Game*; for Mr. G. had a *bad hand*, and managed it very ill.

But what would J. S. have done? *The thing to be made manifest by the Conference, was, the Absolute Certainty of Protestant Faith.* And so it was; for Protestant Faith is to believe all that is contained in Scripture, and no more. Mr. G. did indeed ask some Questions about your Certainty of your Rule; and I gave him direct Answers. Where is the *Tricking* in all this? But I wisely cut off the Course of the Questions before they had question'd away the Certainty of Faith. So far otherwise, that I let them alone, till they plainly run away from the business of Certainty to another Question; and then Mr. T. cut them off, by declaring himself satisfied; and asking *How they could prove the Church of Rome to be Infallible?*

But now we are to see how much better the *Cards* might have been plaid. And now, look ye Gentlemen, the Man of Skill begins the Game. *After the Certainty of Scripture from Tradition was admitted, there was no Refusing to admit that Tradition causes Certainty, and makes Faith as certain as Scripture.* See the difference of these two Gamesters at Tradition! But what if I should yield him, that I will not refuse to give my Assent to any Point of Faith, which comes down to us from the Apostles

Apostles Times with as large and as firm a Tradition as the Scripture? Then (saith he) it would have proved something difficult to satisfy even a willing Man, that the Faith is certain which is opposed to a Faith come down by Tradition. Something difficult! Nay very much so, without doubt. But this is fairly to suppose, that you have as Universal a Tradition for your Tridentine Faith, as we have for the Scripture; but this I utterly deny; and I hope in another Treatise to shew, I have not done it without Reason. Let the Matter of Tradition itself, as a Rule of Faith, be one of these Points. If there were a Constant Universal Tradition in the Christian Church from the Apostolical Times, that there were Matters of Faith necessary to Salvation not contained in Scripture, I grant that it would be difficult, to prove it to be a Matter of Faith that Scripture alone is our Rule of Faith. But that is the mighty Advantage of our Cause, that we have both Scripture and Tradition for us; and that no Catholick Tradition can be produced against us, in any one Point of the Additional Creed of Pius IV. which is the Design I have undertaken, of which I shall suddenly publish the First Part; and if God gives me Life and Health, I hope to go through the Rest. Well; but in the mean time, Absolute Certainty of Scripture was not the Point of the Conference. Can J. S. tell better than the Managers? His meaning is, it ought not to have been. Nor is it the Point of Concern. This is strange. Not the Point of Concern to those that own it to be the Word of God, and the only Rule of Faith! It is of Infinite Concern to us; if it be not to you, I pity you for it.

Besides that, it is agreed on all hands, Men are saved by Believing and Practising what Christ taught, not barely by believing Scripture is Scripture. This is no New Speculation:

culation ; But what follows from it ? *Therefore we ought to believe Christ's Doctrine contained in Scripture, and obey his Commands ;* and do I give the least Intimation against this ? But, the Question was about our *Rule of Faith*, and that I still think is the *Scripture* ; and whatever is contained therein, is to be believed on that Account. *But Salvation is the thing that imports us in these Disputes, and 'twere well if nothing else were minded by Disputers.* And so think I too. I desire no more to end our Controversies, than to make *Salvation* our End, and the *Scripture* our Rule. But how can *Salvation* be the thing that imports us in these Disputes, if Men cannot with Reason hold any thing true, unless they can produce the *Intrinfecal Grounds* which prove it to be so ? Doth Mr. S. in earnest think, that none are saved but *Metaphysical Speculators*, that perch upon the *specifick Nature of Things*, and dig into the *Intrinfecal Grounds of Truth* ? If this be his Opinion, *How few can be saved !* But if *Salvation* be the End, the *Means* must be suitable to the Capacity of Mankind ; and I do not think, the *Intrinfecal Grounds of Truth* are so.

But as yet all, he saith, that I stifle any further talk of the *Certainty of Protestant Faith*. How can that be, when I own no *Protestant Faith* but what is contained in *Scripture*, or may be deduced from it ; according to the *Sixth Article* of our Church. I am not conscious to myself of any *Art in the matter*, which he charges me with ; and he saith, *I avoid what cannot be performed.* What is that ? *To make out that Protestants are absolutely certain that they now hold all the same Doctrine that was taught by Christ and his Apostles.* If all that *Doctrine* be contained in *Scripture*, and they hold the *Scripture* by *Grounds of Absolute Certainty*, then Protestants

testants must be certain *that they hold all the same Doctrine that was taught by Christ and his Apostles.*

Afterwards Mr. S. starts something that comes nearer to the business; which is, *that Certainty of Faith and Certainty of Scripture, are two things: For those who have as much Certainty of Scripture as we, may have not only an Uncertain but a Wrong Faith; and therefore I am concerned to shew, not only that Protestants have Certainty of their Rule, but of the Faith which they pretend to have from that Rule:* That which I am now upon, is to settle the true State of the Controversie about the Certainty of Faith. In the Conference, my first Answer was, that, *We are absolutely Certain that we now hold all the same Doctrine, that was taught by Christ and his Apostles.* And when the Question was asked, *By what Certain Rule do we hold it?* I answer'd, *By the Divine Revelation contained in the Writings of the New Testament.* So that the Certainty of Scripture was that which I was obliged to answer to. Now comes J. S. and he finds fault with Mr. G's management; because he asked Questions about the Certainty of the Rule; whereas he ought to have gone another Way to work. So that now Mr. G. is given up, and a New Controversie is begun upon other Grounds; and the Words which I used with Respect to the Rule, are applied to particular Doctrines. He saith, *The Certainty of Scripture was not the Point for which the Conference was.* How comes he to know better than Mr. G. unless he directed the Point, and Mr. G. mistook and lost it in the Management? *But I am now bound to manifest, that Protestants have Absolute Certainty, not only of the Scripture, as the Rule, but of the Faith they have from that Rule, or else to own that I cannot.* It seems Mr. G's good Nature betray'd him, when he asked Questions about the Rule

of Faith; and so the main Point was lost. Yet methinks it was not meer good Nature in Mr. G. For, when we are asked, about the Grounds and Certainty of our Faith, how is it possible we should answer more pertinently, than to assign the *Rule* of our Faith? And we declare it to be the Scripture, by which we judge what we are to believe, and what not. And therefore if any ask us of the *Matter of our Faith*, we must answer, It is whatever God hath revealed in the Scripture which is our *Rule*. If they ask us, *How we come to know these Books to be written by such Persons*, we say, It is by the *Universal Tradition of the Christian Churches*. If they ask us, *Why we believe the Doctrine contained in those Books*, then our Answer is, *From the Divine Testimonies, which make us certain that it came from God*. And thus we answer both to that which is called, the *Material and Formal Object of Faith*; and if we are *absolutely Certain* of these, we must be so of our Faith. If we ask a Jew about the *Certainty* of his Faith, he saith, he is Certain of it, because all his Faith is contained in the *Books of Moses*, and he is well assured they were written by Divine Inspiration. If we ask a *Mahometan*, of his Faith, his Answer is, That his Faith is contained in the *Alcoran*; and by proving that, he proves the *Certainty of his Faith*; and if that be disproved, the *Certainty* of it is overthrown. Those who resolve their Faith into a Written Rule, must go thither, when Questions are asked them about the *Certainty* of their Faith. For, if I believe every thing in it, and nothing but what is in it, there lies my Faith, and the *Certainty* of it depends upon the *Certainty* of my Rule. But I must shew the *Certainty of the Faith of Protestants*, as it is pretended to be taken from the Rule. Not certainly, when the Question is asked about the *entire Object* of

our Faith, or when we are to shew how we hold all the same Doctrine that was taught by Christ and his Apostles; for the word *All* makes it necessary for us to Assign our Rule wherein that *All* is contained. If he ask us of the Certainty of any particular Point of our Faith, then we are to make it out, that this is contained in our Rule; and our Certainty is according to the Evidence we are able to produce for it.

For the Case is not the same, as to particular Points of Faith, with that of the General Grounds of the Certainty of Faith. A Jew firmly believes all that is contained in the Books of Moses, and with the highest Degree of Certainty; but whether the Resurrection can be proved certainly from those Books, is a particular Point; and he may have Absolute Certainty of all contained in those Books, though he may not have it, as to such a Particular Point. And when we come to Particular Points, their Case is not only different from the General Rule of Faith, but such Points are very different both among themselves, and as to the Certainty of them.

For, (1) There are some Points of Faith, which were necessary to be Revealed, because they were necessary to be Believed, in order to our Salvation by Jesus Christ. For as Mr. S. saith, *Salvation is the thing of greatest Importance*; and therefore on Supposition, that it is to be by Jesus Christ, the Nature of the thing requires, that we have a firm and established Faith in him. And of these Points of Faith, the Church hath given a Summary in the Creeds which were proposed to those who were to be Baptized; and not only St. *Augustin*, but *Aquinas* ^{2. 2. 49. ad 1.} saith, *these were taken out of Scripture*; and the Certainty of them to us, doth depend not upon the Authority of the Church proposing them; but the

Evidence of Scripture for them, which is very much confirmed to us by the *Concurrent Testimony* of the Christian Church in all Ages, from the Apostles times, *i. e.* as to the *main Articles*; for that there was a great variety, as to others, is evident to any one who will compare the *Ancient Creeds*, as I have lately shewed. And these main Articles are those which *Aquinas* calls the *prima Credibilia*; which are therefore revealed, because necessary to be believed by all that hope for Salvation by *Jesus Christ*.

II. There are other *Points of Faith*, which are only necessary to be believed, because they are so clearly revealed; As that *Cajaphas* was *High Priest* when *Christ* suffer'd; that there were two *Malefactors* who suffer'd with him; that he was buried in *Joseph of Arimathea's Sepulchre*; no Man who believes the *Scripture* can doubt of these things; and yet we do not make these *Points of Faith* in themselves necessary, because they have no immediate Reference to *Salvation*, which might have been as effectually carried on, if there had been another *High Priest*, or *Christ* had lain in another *Sepulchre*. But in these *Points* there is an *absolute Certainty* from the unquestionable *Evidence* of their being contained in *Scripture*.

III. There are *doctrinal points* not necessary to Salvation, about which some may attain to a greater Degree of *Certainty* than others. And the same Measure is not required of all; Because Mens Capacities are not equal, if they do use equal Diligence; and all are not obliged to the same Degrees of Diligence that some are. As to the *Points necessary to Salvation*, God is not wanting by his Grace to make them known to Men of honest and sincere Minds. And this is no peculiar Doctrine of mine, as *J. S.* would insinuate, but: it hath been the

the constant Doctrine of their most Learned and Judicious *School-Divines*; as is evident from what they speak of the *Donum Intellectus*, and the *Lumen Fidei*, which secure Men from Error in what concerns their Salvation. If he hath therefore such an Inveterate Spleen against this Doctrine, let him attack the greatest Divines of the Church of *Rome*, who have in terms asserted the same, which I have done. And I would fain see *J. S.* demonstrating against *Aquinas*, and all his followers, *That there is no such Security from Error in Points necessary to Salvation*, where ever God bestows true Grace. As to *Points not necessary to Salvation*, I do not affirm, there is any such Ground of *Absolute Certainty*, as to particular Persons, who are only concerned as to their own *Salvation*. And that was the Reason of my Answer to the fourth Question. "The Universal Testimony of the Christi-

"an Church, concerning the Book of Scripture, and
 "the Doctrine contained therein is a sufficient Ground
 "to make us certain of all Matters necessary to our
 "Salvation. But of this more afterwards. It is sufficient here to observe, that even in the Church of *Rome*, there are *Points of Doctrine*, which are not *de Fide*, and consequently the *Certainty of Faith* is not required to them. And then it is most unreasonable to require the *Absolute Certainty of Faith* in those things which we deny to be *Points of Faith*. It is, as if we should ask them what *Absolute Certainty of Faith* they

Sed circa ea quæ sunt de Necessitate Salutis, sufficienter instruuntur à Spiritu Sancto. 2. 2. 9. 8. a. 4. ad 1.

Donum intellectus nunquam se subtrahit sanctis circa ea quæ sunt necessaria ad salutem, sed circa alia interdum se subtrahit. *ib.* ad. 3.

A. 3. dicendum quod Lumen Fidei facit videre ea quæ creduntur--- ita per habitum Fidei inclinatur mens hominis ad assentiendum his quæ conveniunt certæ Fidei & non aliis. 2. 2. 9. 1. a. 4. ad 3.

Per lumen Fidei divinitus infusum homini homo assentit his quæ sunt Fidei, non autem contrariis; & ideo nihil periculi vel damnationis inest his qui sunt in Christo Jesu, ab ipso illuminati per fidem. 2. 2. 9. 2. a. 3. ad 2.

they have, as to the *Immaculate Conception* and *Assumption* of the *B. Virgin*, or the *Popes Infallibility*, they would tell us, these are no *Points of Faith* with them, and therefore it is unreasonable to ask after the *Absolute Certainty of Faith*, where there is no *Faith* pretended. The same we say, in the like Case, It is very absurd to demand of us the *Absolute Certainty* of our *Faith* in such things, wherein we never pretend to a *Certainty of Faith*; but of common Sense and Reason proceeding according to the *Rule of Scripture*. As, if Men impose false and absurd Doctrines upon us, as *Transubstantiation*; &c. we insist upon the *Common Right of Mankind*, not to be required to believe *Contradictions*; and the *Right of Christians*, not to believe, what hath neither *Scripture*, nor *Reason*, nor *Tradition* for it. And these are the *Grounds* on which we reject the *Additional Creed of Pius the Fourth*. We make them no *Points of Faith* at all; and if others do make them so, we desire to be excused, because it is as certain to us they are not so, as we can be of *Negatives*: And farther than this we go not in such *Points*; and if this be what he means by *Protestant Faith*, he hath my Answer.

IV. The *General Reason* of the *Certainty of Faith* in Particular Persons is not from *Conclusive Evidence* as to the *Points of Faith*, but from some higher Cause. And this Mr. S. ought to know hath been the constant *Doctrine* of the *Schools* ever since *Divinity* hath been brought into them. I except only one *Franciscus de Marchia*, who required conclusive Evidence to the *Certainty of Faith*, but he is disputed

Greg. Ariminens. D. 1. A. 4.
R. 1.

against by *Gregorius Ariminensis*; and he saith, *His Doctrine was condemned by the Faculty of Paris*; and
Grego.

Gregory de Valentia, speaks of him with great Contempt for holding so absurd a Doctrine.

Greg. de Valentia. Tom. 3. Disp. 1. Q. 1. Part. 4.

The Certainty of Faith is declared by the Antient School-men to be above Opinion, and below Science: by which they understood, the Intrinsic Grounds on which Truth is built; which Mr. S. makes necessary to the Profession of it.

Hugo de Sancto Victore, saith, That the highest Certainty of Faith is owing to a Pious and pure Disposition of the Mind, and an immediate Divine Influence.

Hugo de Sancto Victore. Sum. sent. l. 1. c. 1.
De Sacram. l. 1. p. 11. c. 2. 4.
Rich. de Sancto Victor. Declar. Part. 1. p. 373.

Petrus Pictaviensis, That it lies not in Evidence, but Adherence.

Petr. Pictaviens. Sentent. Part. 3. c. 21.

Guliel. Parisiensis, proves Conclusive Evidence repugnant to Faith, in a long Discourse.

Gul. Parisiens. de Fide. c. 1.

Gul. Antissiodorensis, thinks rational Evidence good to support and defend the Faith, and to prepare men for it; But that the Certainty of it lies not in Speculation, but in an Adherence of the Mind to the Prime Verity.

Gul. Antissiodor Sum. in Praef. &c. l. 3. Tit. Q. 2.

Alex. Alensis, saith likewise, its Certainty doth not lie in Speculation, but in inward Affection and Adherence; there is, he saith, an inferiour sort of Acquisitè Faith which relies on Reasons and Testimonies; but this, he saith, is meerly Natural and Preparatory to Divine Faith.

Alex. Alens. Part. 1. Q. 2. M. 3. A. 4.
Part. 3. Q. 68. M. 2. A. 2.

Bonaventure saith, the Certainty of Adherence is beyond that of Speculation, because a Martyr may have doubts, and yet die for his Faith.

Bonavent. l. 3. D. 23. Q. 4.

Thomas

Aquin. 1. 9. 46. a 2. in C.
 19. 9. 32. A. 1. in. E.
 2. 2. 9. 2. a. 1. ad 1.
 9. 1. a. 4. ad 3.
 9. 2. a. 3.
 9. 5. a. 4. C.

mination ; when the Objection was put, *That Matters of Faith could not be resolved into first Principles.* Which Mr. S. hath so long and so vainly pretended to.

Hear. Gandav. Sum. Art. 7. Q. 2.
 N. 6, 7, 8.
 Art. 9. Q. 3. N. 13. 13. Q. 1. N.
 4, 5.

Henricus Gandavensis faith, *There is a Certainty of Adherence in the habit of Faith ; and that the Evidence of Credibility falls much short of that of Science ; and he makes Scripture the Rule, whereby we are to judge of the Doctrine of the present Church, and of all Ages succeeding the Apostles.*

Scot. in Sentent. L. 3. Q. 23. N.
 14, 15.

Scotus distinguisheth between *Acquisit* and *Human Faith*, and *Divine or Infused Faith* ; but he denies any *Infallibility* to belong to the former.

Durand. Prolog. Q. 1. N. 43, 46.
 L. 3. Dist. 24. Q. 3. N. 8, 9.

Durandus denies *Faith* to be consistent with *Conclusive Evidence* ; and that the *Motives of Credibility* affords such *Evidence*, because that necessitates *Assent*. And it is observable, that he resolves *Faith* not into the *Testimony* of the present, but of the *Apostolical Church*.

I need produce no more, to shew what a Stranger Mr. S. is to the *Doctrine* of his own *Church* ; or else what an obstinate Opposer he is of it. But this is sufficient to shew what *Grounds* of the *Certainty of Faith* are allowed by the *Chief Divines* of the *Church of Rome*,

Rome, and how very different they are from those of the *Catholick Letters*. To sum up briefly therefore the *State* of this *Controversie* about the *Certainty* of our *Faith*;

I. I assert, That we are *Absolutely Certain* of the *Formal Object* of our *Faith*, viz. that *whatever God reveals, is True, and to be professed by us, though we do not see the Intrinsic Grounds of it.*

II. We are *Absolutely Certain* of the *Infallible Rule* of our *Faith*; and that *All* the necessary *Points* of *Faith*, in order to the *Salvation* of *Mankind*, are therein contained.

III. The *General Certainty* of *Divine Faith* in true Believers, according to their own *Divines*, doth not depend upon *Conclusive Evidence*, or *Intrinsic Grounds*, but an inward Perception caused by *Divine Grace*.

IV. *Particular Points* of *Faith* are more or less *Certain*, according to the *Evidence* of their *Deduction* from *Scripture* as the *Rule* of *Faith*.

V. Where any *Propositions* are imposed as *Points* of *Faith*, which others deny, those who impose, are bound to prove the *Certainty* of them as such, and not those who reject them.

And this is our Case as to the *Points* in Difference between us and those of the Church of *Rome*: We do not make the *Negatives* any *Points* of our *Faith*, any further than as the *Scripture* is our *Rule*, and we cannot be bound consequently to receive any thing as a *Point* of *Faith*, but what is contained in it, or deduced from it. But the Church of *Rome* requiring us to receive them as *Points* of *Faith*, is bound to prove the *Certainty* of them as such.

Having thus endeavoured to set this *Controversie* about the *Certainty* of *Faith* in its true Light, I now proceed to consider what Mr. S. doth object against it. And I shall conceal nothing that looks like an *Argu-*

ment. His Raillery I despise, and his Impertinencies I shall pass over.

I. That which looks most like an Argument, is, what he hath set out by way of *Propositions* in his *First Letter*.

1. God hath left us some way to know what surely Christ and his Apostles taught.

2. Therefore this way must be such, that they who take it, shall arrive by it at the End it was intended for ; i. e. know surely what Christ and his Apostles taught.

3. Scriptures Letter interpretable by Private Judgments, is not that way ; for we experience Presbyterians and Socinians (for Example) both take that way, yet differ in such high Fundamentals, as the Trinity and the Godhead of Christ.

4. Therefore Scriptures Letter interpretable by Private Judgments, is not the way left by God to know surely what Christ and his Apostles taught, or surely to arrive at Right Faith.

5. Therefore they who take only that way, cannot by it arrive surely at right Faith, since 'tis impossible to arrive at the End, without the means or way that leads to it.

Upon setting down this, Mr. S. being sensible he had plaid his best Cards, cannot help a little expressing the Satisfaction he had in the Goodness of his Game. I do not (saith he) expect any Answer to this Discourse, as short as it is, and as plain, and as nearly as it touches your Copy-hold. Alas for me, that am fallen into the hands of such a Gamester ! But I am resolved to disappoint him, and to give him a clear and full Answer to this shew of Reasoning. And that shall be, by making it appear,

I. That it proceeds upon False Suppositions.

II. That it destroys any Rule of Faith, even his own admired Oral and Practical Tradition.

I. That

I. That it proceeds upon False Suppositions. As.

1. That no *Certainty* can be attained where there is no *Infallibility*. For if Men may arrive at *Certainty* where there is a general *Possibility* of *Deception*, all this seeming *Demonstration* comes to nothing. And yet this is a thing all Mankind are agreed in, who allow any such thing as *Certainty*; and the contrary Opinion was (which Mr. S. little thinks) the very Foundation of *Scepticism*; viz. That there could be no *Certainty*, unless Men could find out such an *Infallible Mark of Truth*, which could not agree to what was False; as he might have learned in Cicero's *Lucullus*, without sending him to Pyrrho's Scholars. And till Zeno and his Disciples pretended to find out this, *Scepticism* gained little Ground; but when they yielded to that Principle, That no *Certainty* was to be had without it, then a mighty Advantage was given them, which they improved accordingly. But the more Judicious Philosophers were forced to quit the *Stoicks Infallible Mark*, and to proceed upon such Evidence of Perception, and Sense, and Ratiocination, as might in things not Self-evident form an Assent which excludes all reasonable Doubt of the contrary. But still those who pretended to *Infallibility*, were the most deceived. As *Epicurus* thought there could be no *Certainty* in *Sense*, unless it were made *Infallible*; and from hence he ran into that gross Absurdity, that the Sun was really no bigger than he seemed to be to our Senses. For, he went just upon Mr. S. his Principles, If there be a possibility of *Deception*, there can be no *True Certainty*; and to make good this *Hypothesis*, the Sun must be no bigger than a Bonfire. But the Wiser Philosophers took in the Assistance of *Reason*, which, though not *Infallible*, might give such Evidence, as afforded *Certainty*, where it fell short of *Demonstration*. As in *Physical* and *Moral* things. I grant, that

some of those who talked most and best of *Demonstration*, fell wonderfully short of it, when they came to apply *Notions* to *Things*; and the *Demonstrations* they made were to little or no purpose, in the promoting of Knowledge, as, that *Man is a Rational Creature*, &c. But their *Physical Speculations* are very far from it; yet this doth not hinder but that a *Certainty* is attainable as to the Nature of Things. And in *Morals*, they knew and confessed there could be no *Demonstration* in them; yet they professed a *true Certainty* they had as to the Nature of *Happiness*, and the real Differences of *Vertue* and *Vice*: They owned some *Moral Principles* to be *Absolutely Certain*, as that *Good is to be chosen, and Evil to be avoided*, &c. but in particular Cases, they made use of the best Reason they had, to prove some things Good, and others Evil. And although they could not proceed with equal *Certainty* in all *Vertues* and *Vices*; yet in some they had clear *Evidence*, and in others they made use of the best means to give Satisfaction to themselves and others.

Thus it is in *Matters of Faith*, there are some things *Absolutely Certain*, as, that *God cannot deceive us*; that *the Scripture is our Rule of Faith*; but then, whether such Points be contained in that Rule and be of *Divine Revelation*, is not Self-evident; and therefore these must be deduced by all the best Methods of *Reasoning* from a *written Rule*; and when Persons have examined the Scripture with all the Care and Diligence, which one who would arrive at *Certainty* thinks himself obliged to, then I do affirm, that such a Man may attain to a *true Certainty and Satisfaction* of Mind about it. And that *true Certainty* is attainable without *Infallibility*, I shall prove by an undeniable Instance (if an Instance will be allowed; and I hope I shall make it appear as reasonable for me to produce *Instances* as himself,) and that

that is, concerning a *Point of Faith* of the greatest Importance, viz. *That Jesus Christ was the true Messias foretold by the Prophets.* The Proof of this depended on the *Interpretation of Scripture*; and there could be no *Infallible Interpreter* relied upon in this Case. As to *Christ himself*, although he really was so, yet we suppose the Question to be about him, whether he were an *Infallible Teacher* or not; and therefore we must not suppose the thing to be proved. As to the *Publick Interpretation*, which Mr. S. makes his *Infallible Rule*, if that were to be relied upon, then a *Jew* was bound not to believe *Christ* to be the *true Messias*, because the *Publick Interpretation* was against him; and the *Traditional Sense* of the *Prophecies* was against him, being for a Temporal Prince; I now demand of Mr. S. whether the *Jews* were capable of *Certainty* in this Point or not? If not, then the *Jews* were excused in their Infidelity: If they were, then true *Certainty* may be had without an *Infallible Guide*, although the *Publick Interpretation* and *Tradition* be against it. And if it may be had in so difficult a Case, which depended on the *Sense of obscure Prophecies*; much more certainly under the clear Revelation of the Gospel; wherein all *Necessary Points* are laid down with so much clearness, that the Fault must be more in *Mens Wills* than their *Understandings*, if they do not apprehend them.

2. The Second false Supposition is, *That a Rule of Faith* must be a *Mechanical Rule*, and not a *Rational*; i. e. It must be like a *Carpenters Rule*, that hath all its Dimensions fixed, and ready to be applied to Material things; but in matters of Understanding no such Rule is to be expected. The *Philosophers* who disputed so much about *Certainty*, would have laughed at any man who had applied a *Material Rule* to Intellectual things; yet this is Mr. S's great Example: *I take my Rule*, Second Lecture, P. 25.
faith

saith he, *and draw a Line by it; does the streightness or crookedness of this Line depend upon my Understanding?* By no means. But is there any such *Intellectual Rule* as this? There have been great Disputes in the World, among Men of Wit and Subtilty, about the *Certainty* of Human Knowledg; Whether any *Infallible Criterion* could be found to discern Truth and Falshood? But they never imagined any such thing as an *Intellectual Ruler to draw Lines by*; but that there were certain Differences of Truth and Falshood, which men might find out, but not without Diligence and Application of their Minds to it. And notwithstanding the Characters of Truth and Falshood were in themselves Certain, yet it was very possible for Men to mistake about them; not only for want of Judgment, but of Diligence and Impartiality: So we say here as to a *Rule of Faith*; we do not suppose it to be a *Material Rule*; i. e. If a Man take the *Letter of Scripture*, and apply it to any Opinions, he must presently know whether they be true or false; but it is a *Rational and Intellectual Rule*, which is *absolutely Certain* in it self; and whatever agrees to it is *True*, and whatever doth not is false: But still there may be mistakes in the *Understanding* and *Applying* it; and therefore *Care*, and *Diligence*, and *Impartiality*, are required; by which some may attain to that *Certainty*, which others miss off. As in the *Points* he mentions of the *Presbyterians* and *Socinians* differing about such high *Fundamentals*, as the *Trinity* and *Godhead of Christ*.

I. Why *Presbyterians* and *Socinians*, I beseech him? There is a notable Insinuation in this, as though we of the *Church of England* were *Socinians* in those Points; and none but *Papists* and *Presbyterians* were Orthodox in them. But this is an Insinuation which hath as much Folly as Malice in it; since our solemn and expresse Declarations

rations, are to the contrary : And he may as well call us *Papists* as *Socinians*, since our Writings are as plainly against one, as the other. What our Sense as to these Matters is, he may find in the *Dialogues* of the *Doctrine of the Trinity and Transubstantiation compared* ; not long since Published by a *Divine* of the *Church of England*. But to pass this over, 2. Suppose the *Difference* between us and the *Socinians*, What then? *Both take the same way of Scriptures Letter Interpretable by private Judgments, and yet differ in these Fundamental Points.* And what follows? That the *Scripture* is no *Certain Rule*? By no means. But that the *Socinians* may err, and certainly do in misinterpreting this Rule. But how can it be a *certain Rule*, if men that use it may err in using it? How can Reason be certain in any thing, if Men following Reason may mistake? How can *Arithmetick* be a *certain way of computation*, if Men following the *Rules of Arithmetick*, may mistake in casting up a *sum*? Doth any Man question the *Certainty* of the *Rule*, for Mens blundering in their *Accompts*? yet this is his way of Reasoning. And I will put it just with his *Propositions*.

I. *Arithmetick* prescribes a *Certain way* by *Addition* and *Subtraction* for us to find out any *Sum*.

II. Therefore it must be such that they who take it, shall arrive by it, at the exact *Sum*.

III. But two Men who have made use of the same way, differ at least a hundred in casting up the *Sum*.

IV. Therefore *Arithmetick* doth not prescribe a *certain way* to attain at a *Certain Sum*.

V. Therefore they who take only that way, cannot by it arrive at the *Certain Sum*.

Is not this clear and evident Demonstration? But those who consider a little better than Mr. S. hath done, will distinguish between the *rule* and the *application* of it. The *Rule* of *Arithmetick* may be nevertheless *Certain*, although those who want Skill, or Care and Diligence, may mistake in casting up a particular Account.

The same we say here, *Scripture* is a *Certain Rule* in all *Fundamental Points*, to such as have Capacity and Use, due Care and Diligence in finding them. But we do not deny, but Men through Prejudice, Weakness, want of Attention, Authority of False Teachers, Impatience of thoroughly examining things, and not using proper Helps may run into gross Errors; such as these about the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*; but still the *Rule* is *Certain* to those who use it aright, although it be very possible for Men through their own Faults to mistake about it.

And this is no way disagreeing to the infinite Wisdom of God, who deals with us as with Rational Creatures; and hath put Faculties into us, that we might use them in order to the *Certainty* of our *Faith*. And such *Moral Qualifications* are required in the *New Testament*, in order to the Discerning the Doctrine of it, as *Humility of Mind*, *Purity of Heart*, *Prayer to God*, *Sincere Endeavour to do the Will of God*; that it would be very repugnant to the Design of it, to suppose that the *Letter of Scripture* alone would give a Man immediate and certain Directions in all Matters of Doctrine being applied to it. Therefore an easie Answer is to be given to Mr. S's. great Difficulty, *viz. How the Sense drawn from the Letter can any more fail to be true, than the Line drawn by the Rule to be straight.* For, we say, *that the Sense truly drawn from the Scripture can never fail*

fail to be true; but we do not say, that every Man must draw the *True Sense* from the *Scripture*; for, although the *Scripture* be an *Infallible Rule*, yet unless every Man that makes use of it be *Infallible*, he may mistake in the *Application* of it. And this to me is so clear, that to make an *Infallible Rule* in his Sense, he must make every Person that uses it *Infallible*, or else he may err in the *Application* of it: *But the Right Way*, saith Mr. S. *will certainly bring a Man to his Journeys End, and the way must needs be a wrong way if it do it not.* The *Right way* will certainly bring them to their Journeys end, if they continue in it; but here we must consider what is meant by the *Journeys End*. If by it be understood their *Salvation*, then we say, that those who do their utmost endeavours to keep in that way, shall not fail of their *Journeys End*. But if by it be understood the *Certain Truth or Falshood of every Opinion tried by the Scripture*, then I answer, that although the Sense of Scripture be infallibly true, yet it was not designed as an *Infallible Way* for us to know the *Truth and Falshood* of all particular *Opinions* by. For, as Mr. S. well observes, *Salvation is that which chiefly imports us*; and it was for that End the Doctrine of Christ is made known to us, and it is an *Infallible Way* to it, if Men continue therein; but for judging the *Truth or Falshood of Opinions* without respect to *Salvation* as the *End*, it was not intended as an *Infallible Way* to every one that makes use of it; and therefore it is easie for Men to mistake in judging by it of things it was not design'd for. As if a Man designed to observe all the *old Roman Cities and Stations* here, and were told the *old Roman Way* would be a *Certain Way* to lead him to them, with the help of the *Roman Itinerary*, if that Man objects, that this will not do, for he cannot find out all the

Second
Letter,
pag. 6.

Modern Towns and Villages by this Means, is it not a just and reasonable Answer to say, that is a most *Certain way*, which leads a Man to that which it was design'd for ; and the *Roman way* was only intended for *Roman Foundations* , but it is very unreasonable to find fault with it, because it doth not lead you to all Modern Towns and Villages. So say I here ; the *Scripture* was design'd by Divine Wisdom to make us *Wise to Salvation*, and thither it will infallibly lead us, if we keep to it ; but if besides this we would know by it such things as are not necessary to Salvation, we blame it for that, which was not in the *Original Intention and Design* of it. For, when we make use of it to be our Rule of Judgment, meerly as to Truth and Falshood of things not necessary to Salvation ; it is not because it was design'd for that End ; but because it is of *Divine Revelation*, and so is the surest Standard of *Divine Truth* ; and we are sure there is no other Rule for us to judge besides. From whence we may and ought to reject any *Points of Faith* impos'd upon us, which are neither contained in Scripture, nor can be proved from it. And so it is our positive *Rule of Faith*, as to all *Necessary Articles* ; and our *Negative Rule* as to all *pretended Points of Faith*, which are not proved from thence.

II. I answer, that this Method of Mr. S. will overthrow the *Possibility* of any *Rule of Faith* ; because none can be assign'd, which it is not possible for Men to misapprehend, and to mistake about it. Let us at present suppose Mr. S. to substitute his *Rule of Faith* in stead of *Scripture*, viz. *Oral and Practical Tradition*. Why may not Men mistake the *Sense* of *Tradition*, as well as the *Sense* of *Scripture* ? Is *Tradition* more *Infallible* in it self ? Is it deliver'd by Persons more *Infallible* ?

fallible ? Doth it make those to whom it is delivered *Infallible* ? Why then, may not those who deliver it, and those who receive it, both be mistaken about it ?

This I had mention'd in my *second Letter*, that it was very possible to mistake the *Sense and Meaning of Tradition* ; and I instanced in that of *Christ's being the Son of God* ; where the Traditionary Words may be kept and yet an *Heretical Sense* may be contained under them. Mr. S. answers, *That the Sense of the Words and all the rest of Christ's Doctrine is convey'd down by Tradition.* This is bravely said, if it could be made out ; and would presently put an End to all Disputes. For if all the Doctrine of Christ be derived down to us in such a manner, that we cannot mistake the *Sense* of it, we must be all agreed, whether we will or not. For, how can we disagree, if we cannot mistake the *Sense* of *Tradition* ? *Not while we hold to Tradition.* Then it seems it is possible not to hold to *Tradition* ; and if so, we have found a terrible flaw in *Human Nature*, that will let in Errors in abundance, viz. that it may grossly err about the Rule of Faith ; yea, so far as to Renounce it. But how is this possible, if the *Sense of Tradition be infallibly convey'd* ? For is not *Traditions being the Rule of Faith* any part of it ? We must in Reason suppose this : And if we do so, how can Persons Renounce its being the *Rule*, while they cannot but believe its being the *Rule* ? If Men may mistake about *Traditions being the Rule of Faith* ; why may we not suppose, they may as well mistake about any *Points* convey'd by it ? For the greatest Security lying in the *Rule*, there must be more Care taken about that, than about the *Points* convey'd by it.

But let us see how he proves that Men cannot mistake the *Sense of Tradition in Particular Points* : The

Second
Letter to
Mr. G.
pag. 7.

Third Ca-
tholick
Letter,
pag. 6.

force of what he saith, is, *That Men were always Men, and Christians were always Christians*; and Mr. S. is always Mr. S. pretending *Demonstration*, when there is nothing like it. If Men were always Men, they were always apt to be deceived; and unless Christians by being such are *Infallible*, they are liable to Mistakes. *But the highest means to convey the Sense of Words are to be found in Tradition.* I am quite of another Opinion; I think it the most uncertain way in the World; and the Corruption of the first Ages of the World are an Evident Proof of it; when there were all possible Advantages of *Tradition*, and yet the Principles of *Natural Religion* were strangely corrupted, although they were plain, easie, few, of the highest Importance, and Men lived so long to inculcate them into the Minds of their Children. If therefore, notwithstanding *Tradition*, the World might then degenerate into *Polytheism* and *Idolatry*; what absurdity is it to suppose, that notwithstanding *Tradition*, the Christian Doctrine might be corrupted likewise?

But Mr. S. alledges not only *Words* but *Actions*, to determine the Sense of them; as, that *Christ is the Son of God*; by *Praying to him*, and giving *Divine Reverence* to *Christ* without *finting* them, or making them *scruple*, lest they give too much, or commit *Idolatry* by giving that to a *Creature*, which is due only to *God*. And does not this *Practice*, beyond all possibility of *Mistake*, insinuate into them, that he is equally to be adored with *God the Father*, or *Co-equal* to him, and so not a *Creature*, but *Very God of Very God*?

I Answer,

I. Would not the very same Reasoning have made the coming in of *Idolatry* impossible? For, that there was but *one True God*, was evident from all *Acts of Worship*,

Worship, being given only to Him, as the proper Object of it : How then could Men so foully mistake, as to give proper Divine *Worship* to any Creature, there being an infinite Distance between God and his Creatures, which every Child could not but know by a constant Tradition from *Adam*.

II. How was it possible that *External Acts of Worship* should so infallibly prove *Christ to be true God*, if all External Acts of *Worship* be of an *Equivocal Nature*, and receive their Determination from the inward Sense of the Mind? Did not the *Arians* use the same *External Acts of Worship* with others, with respect to *Christ*? Where did they ever separate from the *Christian Assemblies*, on the account of the *Worship* given to *Christ*? If not, how was it possible from thence to prove *Christ* not to be a *Creature*? So that this is very far from putting the Point of the *Divinity of Christ* beyond the possibility of *Mistake*. Especially, when *Solemn Invocation*, which is one of the most natural Parts of *Divine Worship*, came to be allowed to meer Creatures. All the difference that can be assigned then, must be from Mens *Words and Professions*, and not from their *External Actions*.

III. The same *Divine Reverence* was given to *Christ* in the *Apostolical Times*, and the utmost Care used to instruct People in the True Doctrine of *Christ*; and yet then we find that Persons did Err in the Sense of that Proposition, That *Christ is the Son of God*. For, even then, the *Ebionites* and *Cerinthians* understood it, not in Respect of *Nature*, but *Adoption*; and so did the *Artemonites* and *Samosatenians* afterwards. And how can that be proved impossible to be done, which we shew was actually done? Men did notoriously mistake the Sense of *Christ's being the Son of God*, when it was received

ceived by *Tradition* ; and yet Mr. S. pretends it cannot be mistaken, if it be so received.

Third Letter, P. 14. Mr. S. still urges, That *Faith* hath Sense in it ; and it is inconsistent with the Nature of Mankind, not to hold some Sense or other, and with the Nature of Christians, not to instruct their Children in that Sense. And I think Words written have as much Sense in them as Words spoken, and less liable to Mistakes ; there being no such mixtures of the Infirmities of Men in a *Written Rule*, as in *Oral Tradition*. But Instances are unlucky things to be brought against *Demonstrations*, and such is that of the *Cerinthians* and *Artemonites*, who pleaded *Tradition* for their Sense ; and yet they were Men, and pretended to deliver the true *Doctrine of Christ* to their Disciples.

I alledged another Instance, how the Sense of *Tradition* might be mistaken ; and that was about a *Real Presence* in the *Eucharist*, which might be understood in very different Senses. No, saith Mr. S. That cannot be ; for, *Faith* works on our devout Affections, which must either oblige us to pay an infinite Veneration to a Creature, if *Christ's* real Body (and consequently God) be not there, or if *Christ* be not God, which is the greatest deviation from true Religion that is possible ; or else to be highly irreverent, and to want the most efficacious Motive that can be imagined to excite and elevate our Devotions, if he be there, or *Christ* be indeed God. Truly Mr. S's way of Writing is the most effectual means I know to make me Question whether written Words be a good way to convey a Certain Sense to our Minds. For, I cannot understand, how *Faiths* working on our devout Affections, should oblige us, either to pay an infinite Veneration to a Creature, or else to be highly Irreverent. For, supposing I believe *Christ's* Body not to be really in the *Eucharist*,
but

but yet that *Christ himself is God*, I think my self bound to shew the utmost Reverence to *Christ as God*, even in the *Act of Receiving the Eucharist*: And I am of Opinion, that the just Apprehension of the Divine Majesty, is as apt to *excite and elevate our Devotion*, as the believing the *Body of Christ* to be there really present. But it is observable, what Mr. S. here grants, that if *Christ's Body* be not there, they are guilty of *paying an Infinite Veneration to a Creature, which is the greatest deviation from true Religion that is possible*. And upon my Word then they had need have better Assurance, than what he offers, to prove *Christ's real Body* to be there. For, if as great Reverence may be paid to *Christ in Heaven*, as if he were *in the Elements*, I cannot see how the Posture of *Adoration* can any ways determin the *Sense of Tradition* in this Matter.

And thus Mr. S. hath left the *Sense of Tradition* as *uncertain*, as he pretends that of *Scripture* to be; and if his Argument will hold against the One being the *Rule of Faith*, it will do as great a Kindness for the Other also. Thus I have fully answered his main Argument, against *Scriptures* being a *Rule of Faith*, which he hath been so free with me, as to tell me I *cannot Answer*; and he and I must now leave it to the *Reader's Judgment*. *First Letter, p. 32.*

The summ of it is,

I. We distinguish *Necessary Points of Faith*, from *Matters of Speculation*.

II. We distinguish *Certainty of Faith* in order to *Salvation*, and *Certainty of Opinion* in *Matters of Controversie*.

III. We distinguish the *Certainty of the Rule*, from the *Certainty of the Application of that Rule*.

And

And then my Answer lies in these things ;

I. That the *Scripture* is a certain *Rule of Faith* as to all *Points necessary to Salvation*, to all such as make use of it as such, and do not through their own fault make a wrong *Application* thereof.

II. That the *Scripture* was not designed for a *Certain Rule* as to *Unnecessary Opinions* ; and therefore Mens not arriving at a *Certainty* in them, doth not hinder its being a *Rule of Faith*.

III. That *Scripture* being our *Rule of Faith*, we are bound to reject all pretended *Articles of Faith*, which cannot with *Certainty* be proved from the *Sense of Scripture*. And so the Proof of *Certainty* lies upon those who affirm such *Articles of Faith*, and not upon us who deny them.

This Argument is Mr. S's *Goliath*, and now it is no wonder if his lesser *Men at Arms* soon quit the Field. But I must take some notice of them, lest they be magnified, by being slighted.

His next Argument is, *That I contradict myself* : I hope I have in the beginning made him unwilling to repeat such a Charge against me, till he hath cleared himself. But wherein is it ? In another place, he saith, *I deny any Absolute Certainty as to Tradition attesting the Books of Scripture ; which in the Conference I asserted*. I have looked in the Place he refers to, and there I find nothing like it. I deny the Necessity of any Infallible Society of Men, either to Attest or Explain the *Scripture*. Where, by an *Infallible Society* of Men, I mean such as have a *Divine Assistance* to that purpose : And what is this to the *Absolute Certainty* we have of the *Books of Scripture* by *Universal Tradition* ? But he urges it further, *If this Society be not Infallible, then*
it

it is Fallible; and if it be Fallible, then we cannot be more than fallibly Certain, and so we can have no absolute Certainty from a Fallible Testimony. This is the whole force of what he saith. To which I Answer,

I. I understand no such thing as *Infallibility* in Mankind, but by *immediate Divine Assistance*, I grant, that the Holy Spirit may, where he pleases, preserve the Minds of Men from any possibility of mistake, as to those things, wherein it doth enlighten them; but set aside this, there is no such thing as *Infallibility*; the utmost is a *rational Certainty* built on clear and convincing Motives. Where the *Motives* are merely probable, there may be *Opinion*, but no *Certainty*; where the Evidence is thought so strong as to determine Assent, there is a *Certainty* as to the Mind; as when we commonly say, we are *certain* of such things, we mean no more, than that we firmly believe them; but when the Evidence is the highest, which in point of Reason the thing is capable of, then there is that which I call *Absolute Certainty*; i. e. such as depends not merely on the Assent of the Mind, but the Evidence which justifies that Assent.

II. If by being *fallibly Certain*, he means any *Suspicion*, that notwithstanding such Evidence in all its Circumstances, I may be deceived, then I utterly deny it; for otherwise I could not be *absolutely Certain*; but if he means only, that there is no *Divine Infallibility* (and I know no other) then I own that there is still *human Fallibility* consistent with this *Absolute Certainty*. But Mr. S. will have *Absolute Certainty* to be *Infallible*: If nothing will satisfy him, but *Human* (i. e. fallible) *Infallibility*, much good may it do him, but I much

rather chuse proper Terms, which I know the certain meaning of, than improper, though they make a far greater Noise. I do own an *Absolute Certainty* in some Acts of the Mind by *inward Perception*, as that *I think*, *I doubt*, and *that I am*; I do own an *Absolute Certainty* as to common Objects of Sense; and as to some Deductions of Reason; I do own an *Absolute Certainty* as to some Matters of Fact, by a Concurrence of Circumstances; but for all that, I do not account Human Nature *Infallible*, nor this an *Infallible Certainty*, unless it be taken in another Sense than *Divines* take it in. For even the *Divines* of the Church of Rome as well as Ours make a difference between a *Human* and *Acquisitive Certainty*, and that which is *Divine* and *Infallible*. And if Mr. S. by *Divine* means *Human*, and by *Infallible* no more than *Certain*, he must not think he hath gained any great matter, when he hath made use of Words in an improper and unusual Sense.

First Letter,
ser. P. 25.

III. His next Argument is, That our Rule of Faith is common to all the Heresies in the World, which pretend Scripture, as well as we. This is just the Old Sceptical Argument against Certainty; if there be any such thing as Certainty, you must assign such a Criterion which is not common to Truth and Falshood; but if you cannot assign any such Mark of Truth, which may not as well agree to what is False, then there is no such thing as Certainty to be had. In Matters of this nature, the Proof must not lie in generals, but we must come to particulars, to shew the Grounds of our Certainty, viz. as to the Trinity, and Incarnation of Christ, and then if we cannot shew why we believe those Points, and reject the opposite Heresies, as *Arianism*, *Subellianism*, *Eutychianism*, &c. then we are to be blamed for want of Certainty

Certainty in these Points, but not before. *But this*, he saith, *is to make Light and Darkness very consistent, and Christ and Belial very good Friends.* It seems then, there is no difference to be found by the Rule of Scripture, between the *Doctrine of Christ* and the *Devil*. Is this in Truth your avowed Principle? Do you in earnest believe the Scripture to be such a *Chaos*, where there is no difference of *Light and Darkness*, and that nothing but *Confusion* can be found in it; And we cannot tell by it, whether we are to *Worship God or the Devil*? If Mr. S. grants, that there is enough in Scripture to distinguish these two; then it is a *Rule* so far, as to put a difference between *Light and Darkness*, between *Christ and Belial*; and so these Expressions must be disowned as little less than *Blasphemous*, for all his pitiful Defence of them in his *Second Letter*; which is, *That he never said that Christ and Belial could be reconciled, or advanced any Position that implied it.* But he said, *That to make Scripture our Rule, is to make Light and Darkness consistent, and Christ and Belial very good Friends.* And is not this *Blasphemy* against Scripture? and implies, that if we go by that Rule only, *they may be very good Friends.* How can this be, unless he asserts that by Scripture alone, we can find no certain difference between *Light and Darkness*, between *Christ and Belial*? Let Mr. S. Answer to this, and not think to escape with such a poor Evasion. If he owns the *Scripture a Certain Rule* as to the difference of *Christ and Belial*, and *Light and Darkness*, then we have gained thus much, that in some Matters of very great Moment, the *Scripture* is a very *sufficient Rule, and Ground of Certainty*, as to all Points between Us and Infidels. And if it be so, as to these Points, then why not as well as to other Points consequent upon these? *If Christ be the Eternal Son of*

Second Letter,
p. 73,
74.

God in opposition to *Heathen Deities*, and we can know him by *Scripture* to be so, then we may as well know him to be the *Eternal Son of God* in opposition to *Arians* and *Socinians*. If against the *Heathens* we can prove from *Scripture*, that *the Word was made Flesh*, Why will not this as well hold against *Nestorians* and *Eutychians*? And so the *Scripture* becomes a very sufficient *Rule* to distinguish *Light* and *Darkness* in such Points among *Christians* too. For, is it ever the less fit to be a *Rule*, because both Parties own it? But they differ about the *Sense* of it, and therefore *Controversies* can never be ended by it. If *Church-History* deceive us not, the greatest *Controversies* were ended by it, before *General Councils* were heard of; and more than have been since. Many of those we read of in the First Ages were quite laid asleep, as *Theodoret* observes; but since *Church-Authority* interposed, in the most Reasonable manner, some Differences have been perpetuated, as appears by the *Nestorian* and *Eutychian* *Controversies*. I do not blame the *Authority* of *Councils*, proceeding as they then did by the *Rule* of *Scriptures*, but the Event shewed, that the most probable Means, are sometimes very ineffectual for ending *Controversies*. And those which Men think will most effectually suppress *Heresies*, do often give a New Life and Spirit to them. So vain are the *Imaginations* of Men about putting an End to *Controversies*, till they do come to a *Certainty* about the true *Sense* of *Scripture*. It is possible to stop Mens Mouths by Force and Power, but nothing brings Men to a true Satisfaction, but inward Conviction as to the true *Sense* of *Scripture*; and there can be no rational *Certainty* as to these Points without it. If *Controversies* be not ended, let us not blame the *Wisdom* of *Providence*; for God doth not always appoint

Theod. Ha-
ret. Fab.
1, 2, 3.

point the Means most effectual in our Judgment, but such as are most suitable to his own Design. And we see Reason enough to blame the Folly and weakness, the Prejudice and Partiality, the Wilfulness and Obstinacy of Mankind; and till Human Nature be brought to a better Temper, we may despair of seeing any *End of Controversies*. Men may Dispute, and for all that I know, will do to the Worlds End, about the Method to put an End to Disputes. For, the Controversies about *Certainty* and *Fatality* have been always the Matters of Debate, among disputing Men, under several Names and *Hypotheses*, and are like so to be to the general Conflagration.

IV. He saith, *Scripture is not our distinguishing Rule of Faith, but our own particular Judgments about Scripture; for that which distinguishes my Rule from that of the most abominable Heresies, can only be my own Judgment upon the Letter of Scripture, and wriggle which way I will, there it will, and must end at last.* I wish Mr. S. had been a little better conversant in the old Disputes about *Certainty*; for it would have saved me the trouble of answering some impertinent Objections; such as this before us. For they would have been thought mean Logicians, who could not put a difference between the *Rule of Judgment*, and the *Judgment* which a Man made according to the Rule. Suppose the Question were about *Sense*, whether that were a *certain Rule*, or not, to judge by; and *Epicurus* should affirm it, and say he so firmly believed it, that he judged the Sun to be no bigger than he seemed to his Senses; would not he have been thought ridiculous, who should have said, this Fancy of *Epicurus* was his *Rule*? The *Rule* he went by was in it self certain; but he made a wrong Judgment upon it; but that was not his Rule.

So

First Letter, p. 26.

So it is here. We declare the *Scripture* to be our only certain and standing *Rule*, whereby we are to judge in Matters of Faith; and we understand it as well as we can, and form our Judgments by it; but doth it hence follow, that our *Judgment* is our *Rule*? We may be deceived in our Judgments, but our *Rule* is *Infallible*; we may differ in our *Judgments*, but our *Rule* is one and the same. And how is it possible for those who differ in *Judgment*, to have the *same Rule*, if our *Rule* and our *Judgments* be the same? For then their *Rules* must be as different as their Judgments. I know not what Modern *Logick* Mr. S. learnt; but I am sure he learnt not this way of *Reasoning* from the Antient *Philosophers*, who discoursed about the *Criterion* after another manner than our great pretender to *Logick* doth.

First Letter, p. 26.

V. He objects, *That our People do not make Scripture the Rule of their Faith, not one in a Million relying upon it; and therefore this pretence of mine, he saith, looks like a meer Jest; and he cannot persuade himself, that I am in earnest, while I advance such a Paradox.* What doth J. S. mean, to call one of the Articles of our Church, a *Jest* and a *Paradox*? For the Words of our Sixth Article, are, *Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation.*

Doth J. S. now take this for a *Paradox* among us? I assure him, I love not to make *Jests* about *Scripture*, nor matters of *Faith* and *Salvation*. But wherein doth this *Jest* lie? *Why, forsooth, I make the People to make Scripture their Rule, and not one in a Million thinks of relying on it.* Have they then any other *Rule of Faith*, which

which they rely upon? What is it, I pray? Is it the Churches Infallibility? No. Is it *Pius* the Fourth's Creed? No truly, while they are Children, they believe Tradition. Now, I think, *J. S.* hath hit it. Tradition is indeed a Rule of Faith for Children; who are very apt simply to believe their Fathers and Teachers. But suppose, they come to years of Discretion, what Rule of Faith have they then? Have they a Judgment of Discretion then? No; this is another Jest. For he supposes all our People to be a dull sort of Animals, that understand nothing of Scripture or Faith themselves, (I wonder then, that they make no more Converts among them) but trust their Parson for all; For, *Boves arabant & Asina pascebantur juxta eos*; therefore the People have no Judgment of Discretion; I hope *J. S.* knows whose Jest or rather Argument that was. Whatever he insinuates, as to our People, I have Reason to believe far better of them; and that all those who mind their Salvation do seriously read, and consider the Holy Scriptures, as the Rule of their Faith. But if in Matters of Opinion, or in doubtful or obscure Places, they make use of the Skill, and Assistance of their Teachers, wherein are they to blame? The Scripture is still their Rule, but the help of their Teachers is for the better understanding it. And cannot our Logician distinguish between the Rule of Faith, and the Helps to understand it? Suppose now a Mother or a Nurse should quit honest Tradition, as *J. S.* here calls it; and be so ill inclined, as to teach Children to spell, and to read in the New Testament, and by that means they come by degrees to understand the Doctrine which Christ preached, and the Miracles which he wrought, and from thence to believe in Christ, and to obey his Commands, I desire to know, into what these Persons do Resolve their Faith.

Is it indeed into those who taught them to read ? or into the *New Testament*, as the *Ground* of their Faith ? When they have been all along told, that the *Scripture* alone is the Word of God ; and whatever they are to believe, it is because it is contained therein. And so, by whatever means they come to understand the *Scripture*, it is that alone they take for the *Rule* and *Foundation* of their Faith. If a Man were resolved to observe *Hippocrates* his Rules ; but finds himself incapable of understanding him, and therefore desires a *Physicians* Help ; I would fain know, whether he relies upon the Skill of his Interpreter, or the Authority of *Hippocrates* ? It is possible his Interpreter may in some doubtful and obscure Places have mistaken *Hippocrates* his Meaning ; but however, the Reason of his keeping to the Rules is not upon the Account of the Interpreter, but of *Hippocrates*. But suppose a College of Physicians interpret *Hippocrates* otherwise, is he bound then to believe his own Interpreter against the Sense of the College ? I answer, If a College of Physicians should translate Bread for Cheese ; or by *Phlebotomy* should declare was meant cutting of Arteries, or of a Mans Throat, let them presume to be never so *Infallible*, I would trust any single Interpreter, with the help of *Lexicons* and *Common Sense* against them all ; but especially, if I can produce *Galen*, and the old Physicians, who understood *Hippocrates* best, on my side. This is our Case, as to the People, about *disputable Points* ; we do not set up our own Authority against a Church pretending to be *Infallible* ; we never require them to trust wholly to our Judgments ; but we give them our best Assistance, and call in the old Interpreters of the Church ; and we desire them to use their own Reason and Judgment with Divine Assistance for settling their Minds.

If

If People be negligent and careless, and will not take necessary pains to inform themselves, which Mr. S. suggests, we are not bound to give an Account of those, who do not observe our Directions. And I never yet knew the Negligent and Careless brought into a Dispute of Religion; for in this Case, we must suppose People to act according to the Principles of the Religion they own; otherwise their Examples signifie no more against our Doctrine, than *Debauchery* doth against the Rules of *Hippocrates*.

But suppose, saith Mr. S. that one of my own Flock should tell me, that I have erred in interpreting Scripture, he desires to know, what I would say to him. Page 19. This is a very easie Question, and soon answer'd. I would endeavour to Convince him as well as I could. And is that all? And what would J. S. do more? Would he tell him he was Infallible? I think not; but only as *honest Tradition* makes him so, and how far that goes towards it, I shall examine afterwards.

Well; but suppose *John Biddle* against the Minister of his Parish, and the whole Church of England to boot, understands Scripture to be plainly against a Trinity and Christ's Divinity.

And it is but fair for me to suppose him, maintaining his Herefie against J. S. and let any one judge whether of us be more likely to Convince him. He owns the Scripture, and confesses if we can prove our Doctrine from thence, he will yield; but he laughs at Oral Tradition, and thinks it a *Jest* for any one to prove such a Doctrine by it. And truly, if it were not for the Proofs from Scripture, I do much Question, whether any Argument from meer Tradition could ever confute such a one as *John Biddle*. But when we offer such Proofs, as are acknowledged to be sufficient in themselves, we

take the only proper way to give him Reasonable Satisfaction. *Suppose he will not be convinced.* Who can help that? Christ himself met with Wilful and Obstinate Unbelievers. And was this any disparagement to his Doctrine? God himself hath never promised to cure those who shut their Eyes against the Light.

Page 29. *Shall the Believing Church then have the Liberty to interpret Scripture against the Teaching Church? Who ever asserted any such thing? We only say, that the People are to understand the Grounds of their Faith; and to judge by the best Helps they can, what Doctrine is agreeable to Scripture, and to embrace what is so, and to reject what is not: But among those Helps we take in, not barely the personal Assistance of their own Guide, but the Evidence he brings, as to the Sense of the Teaching Church, in the best and purest Ages.*

Page 29. *It is very strange, that after this, it should presently follow, 'Tis evident hence, that Tradition of our Fathers and Teachers, and not Scriptures Letter, is indeed our Rule; and by it we interpret Scripture. If this be so evident, then how is it possible, we should set up the Ecclesia Credens against the Ecclesia Docens; as he charged us just before. If Tradition be our Rule, and we interpret Scripture by it, what fault then are we guilty of, if Tradition be such an Infallible Rule? But, methinks, this Hence looks a little Illogically upon the Premises; and if this be his Conclusive Evidence, he must excuse me as to the making it a Ground of my Faith.*

But he allows, That we set up Scripture as our Rule, when we Dispute against them; but when that is done, we set up our own Authority over the People, and do not allow

allow them that Priviledge against us, which we take against the Church of Rome. This is all the strength of what I can make out of that Paragraph. For if all Writing were like his, it would be the best Argument for Oral Tradition; his Sense is so intricate, and his Conclusions so remote from his Premises. Just before he said, *'Tis evident hence that we follow Tradition.* And presently, *'Tis as evident we do not follow it, and set up our own Authority against it.* We do interpret Scripture by Tradition; and yet immediately, we set up Scripture against Tradition. We plead for the Peoples Right to a Judgment of Discretion; and yet we do not allow them a Judgment of Discretion. What invisible links hath Oral Tradition to connect things, that seem so far asunder?

But however it be expressed or connected, his meaning is, *That we only set up Scripture against the Church of Rome, and then set up our own Authority over the People.* This is not possible, if we do allow them a Judgment of Discretion; and this is one of the things he so much charges upon me; and saith, *He never read any Protestant that puts Matters more into private hands than I do;* and yet in the very next Page, he saith, *I deny the People the same Priviledge against Pastoral Authority.* How can I deny them such a Priviledge, if I put Matters into their hands above any other Protestant? I do not know, that I do in the least differ from the sixth Article of our Church; nor do I take off from the due Authority of Bishops and Pastors of Churches. But all our Dispute is, about this Judgment of Discretion, whether it be allowable to People, and how far.

Page 29.

In his Third Letter he resumes this Argument, and thither I follow him, that I may lay things together

Third
Letter,

into some Method. The words he cavils at, are, "If
 " we have the Consent of all Christian Churches against
 " the only pretended Infallible Judge, we have their
 " Consent likewise, that every Man is to judge for
 " his own Salvation. What hurt is there in this? *It
 seems then nothing will content us now but Infallibility.*
 Was there ever such an awkward Man at Reasoning? It
 follows indeed, that either there must be an Infallible
 Judge, or every Man must judge for himself. *Do I
 then allow no Authority to Church-Governors, that do not
 pretend to Infallibility?* Yes, very much, while they
 do not pretend to Impose on our Faith, by a pretence to
 Infallibility. But what Occasion do I give for this,
 when I say only, *That every Man must judge for his own
 Salvation*; and yet he had the Conscience to leave this
 out in repeating my Sense, but two lines after. May
 not you mistake or pervert to Day, what you heard
 Yesterday, when I find you mistaking or perverting
 my Sense, but at two lines distance? And then run on
 in a long Discourse, as though you had taken the true
 Sense of my Words. Is not this a fit Person *to play out
 Mr. G's Game*, who *shuffles* in so strange a manner, and
 so openly *plays false Cards*? Where did I ever dispute
 against Church-Authority in due proposing Matters of
 Faith, provided that every Man is to judge for his own
 Salvation? *But I have*, he saith, *an aking Tooth at the*
Churches intermeddling in Matters of Faith. From
 whence doth this appear? This must either arise from
 great Ignorance, as to the Right of Judging every Man
 hath as to his own Salvation; or from a Malicious De-
 sign, to expose me to all Church-Governors; but I pity
 his Ignorance, and despise his Malice. What pleasant
 Entertainment doth he make with the Sober Enquirer?
'Tis pity (saith he) *but he had a blew Apron on, and a Tub*

to *Hold forth in*; as a *Sober Enquirer* may possibly find some Pretenders to *Infallibility* have done in their Time. But what is the meaning of all this ado about a *Sober Enquirer*? I had said many years ago, "That the Scriptures being owned, as containing in them the whole Will of God so plainly revealed, that no *Sober Enquirer* can miss of what is necessary for Salvation, there can be no Necessity supposed of an *Infallible Society of Men* either to Attest or Explain these Writings among Christians, any more than there was for some Ages before Christ, of such a Body of Men among the Jews, to Attest or Explain to them the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets. And where lies the Heresie or Danger of this Doctrine? If I said that no *Sober Enquirer* can miss of things necessary to Salvation in Scripture, it is no more than *St. Chrysostom*, *St. Augustin*, *Aquinas*, and other School-men, had said before me; and *Were they for blew Aprons and Tubs to Hold forth in*? Nay, to shew how unskillful *J. S.* is in the Writers of his own Church, (if they do own him) even *Bellarmin* himself grants as much as I say. For being to Answer that Place *Jam. 1. 5. If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, &c.* he Answers, This is to be understood of *Sapientia necessaria ad Salutem*; so then a *Sober Enquirer* praying to God to give him Wisdom, shall not want that which is Necessary to his Salvation. And he quotes several Passages of *St. Augustin* to prove, that Prayer obtains nothing *Infallibly* but that which is necessary or useful to the Salvation of him that prays. If this be then obtained *Infallibly*, then we see an *Infallible Ground of Certainty*, as to what is Necessary or Useful to Salvation. *Bellarmin* indeed saith, that a Gift of Interpretation is not to be had by Prayer; and, Do I ever say it is?

*Bell. de
verbo Dei,
l. 3. c. 6.
sect. Re-
spondeo.*

is? Did I ever give the least Countenance to Enthusiastick Pretenders, or to the Breakers of the Laws and Orders of our Established Church? What means then these spiteful Insinuations? Doth the Man hope to raise Himself by exposing Me? Or to be caressed by F.P. and F.W. by the brave attempt of throwing Dirt so plainly in my Face? Which will never stick, being so unskillfully thrown, either to my Prejudice, or his Advantage.

But this Matter about the Peoples Judgment of Discretion, must not be thus pass'd over. For, he resumes it at the End of his *Third Letter*, and thought it a good relishing bit to conclude with. And towards the very end, he begins to state the Controversie, this true Logician having forgotten it before, or reserved it for a Disert at the last.

Third Letter,
107, P. 99

To come closer (saith he) and take a more distinct view of this Judgment of Discretion. It was even time to come closer in the 99th. p. of the *Third Letter*. Alas for Mr. G.! he is like to have a hopeful Game of it, when his Substitute talks at this rate at the very end of the Game. But let us see what feats he will do now he comes closer. *Now he will acquaint me, how far he allows it, and far and how in what he rejects it.* This is well; but why no sooner? He was at another Game before, viz. two or three throws at the *Sober Enquirer*, and having knock'd him down with his *blew Apron and Tub*, he now comes to T. G's *Cards* again. And let us see how well he plays them. First, He grants, *That every Man is to judge for his own Salvation; i. e.* he yields what the *Sober Enquirer* aimed at, and now methinks he desires the *blew Apron and Tub*, to Hold forth himself. Secondly, He saith, *All Mankind are agreed in it.* It seems then the *Fanaticks* are true *Catholicks* in Mr. S's Opinion. Thirdly, He yields, *That every Man*

is to judge of the best way to Salvation, and of all the Controversies between Them and Us. Now the Tub is turn'd to a Chair, and the Holder-forth become a Judge of Controversies. Nay, he goes so far as to say, the contrary Tenet is ridiculous, as what's most ; nay, that it is sottishness to hold it ; and to deprive Mankind of this Priviledge of judging thus, is to debar him of the Light and Use of his Reason, when it is most useful for him. Is not all this very obliging ? But where now lies the difference ? Why, truly, if his Discretion leads him to the Infallible Rule of Tradition, all is well ; but if not, it is no longer Discretion. What ? Has he been Judge of all the Controversies between Us already, and is he to seek for his Rule still ? What Discretion had he all that time, to judge without a Rule ! What a Judge of Controversies have we found at last ? Methinks the Sober Enquirer far exceeds him in point of common Discretion ; for he never pretended to judge without a Rule, much less all the Controversies between Us. But this discreet Judge of all Controversies first determines all the Points ; and when he hath done this, he finds out his Rule. Of all the Judges of Controversies that have been yet talked of, commend me to this set up by J. S. For, how is it possible for him to judge amiss, who had no Rule to judge by ?

You see (saith he) how we allow them the Use of their Reason and Judgment of Discretion, till it brings them to find a certain Authority, and when they have once found that, the same Judgment of Discretion which shewed them that Authority was Absolutely Certain, obliges them to trust it, when it tells them what is Christ's Faith, without using their private Judgments any longer about the particular Points themselves thus ascertained to them, but submitting to it. To which I Answer,

p. 102.

I. The

I. The same reason which enabled Men to find out this *Infallible Guide*, or *Certain Authority* will help them to judge concerning this *Authority*, and the Matters proposed by it. For, either he hath a Rule to find out this *Authority*, or he hath none; if he hath a Rule, it must be either *Scripture*, or pure *Natural Reason*. If *Scripture*, that only affords *Fallible Certainty*, he saith over and over, and so a Man can never come certainly to this *Authority*. And if the Foundation be uncertain, what can the Rule do? But Mr. S. doth not pretend *Scripture*, but *Reason*, for his *Infallible Rule*. Then I demand, whether *Reason* doth afford an *Infallible Ground of Certainty*, as to this *Certain Authority* or not? If it doth, we are yet but *Fallibly Certain*; if it doth not, then what need this *Certain Authority*; for in the Opinion of all Reasonable Men, *certain Reason* is better than *certain Authority*. And he cannot deny the *Certainty of Reason*, who builds the *Certainty of Authority* upon it.

II. Suppose the particular Points proposed by this *Certain Authority* be repugnant to that *Certainty of Reason*, by which I am required to believe it: As suppose this *Authority* tells me, I am no longer to rely upon my *Reason*, but barely to submit, although the Matter proposed be never so much against it; What is to be done in this Case? I am to believe this *Certain Authority* on the Account of *Reason*, and that requires me to believe such things as overthrow the *Certainty of Reason*; How is it possible for me to rely on this *Certain Authority* on the *Certainty of Reason*, when that *Authority* tells me, there is no *Certainty in Reason*?

III. Must I believe *Reason* to be *Certain* just so far and no further? But who sets the bounds? Hath God Almighty done it? When and where? I may and ought to use my *Reason* in searching after this *Certain Authority*, and judge all Controversies in order to the finding it out; all this is allowed; but as soon as ever this *Certain Authority* is discover'd, then *Goodnight Reason*; I have now no more Use for you. But who bid you be so ungrateful to that *Certain Reason*, which conducted you so far? It is very possible it may be as Useful still, why then do you turn *Reason* off so unkindly after so good Service?

IV. Are all People capable of this *Certain Reason*, or not? It requires, it seems, a great deal of Logick to prove this *Certain Authority*, or this *Infallible Guide* by *Reason*; and I am one of those that think it can never be done: Suppose then, some of us duller People can never comprehend the force of this *Reason*, which is to lead us to an *Infallible Guide*, What is like to become of us *Uncapable People*? Are we all to be damned for Dunces and Blockheads? No, not so neither: This is really some Comfort. For then it is to be hoped we may go to Heaven without finding out this *Certain Authority*; and then we may have *True Faith* without it. This is still better and better. And then I pray what need have I to find out this *Certain Authority* at all, if I may have *True Faith* and be Saved without it?

V. I have greater Certainty by *Reason* of the *Certain Authority* of *Scripture*, than you can have of the *Certain Authority* of *Tradition*. Here is *Reason* on both sides, and *Authority* on both sides; but I say there is no Comparison between either the *Reason* or the *Authority*.

The *Reason* to believe the *Scripture*, is so incomparably beyond the Reason to believe *Oral Tradition*. And the *Authority* of *Scripture* hath so much greater Force on the Consciences of Men, that it is very extraordinary among those who own *Scripture* to be the Word of God, to find them compared in Point of *Authority*. For, we must deal plainly in this Matter ; the *Scripture* we look on as the *Rule* of our *Faith*, because it is the *Word of God*. If you do not own it to be so, but resolve all into *Tradition*, we know what you are ; but if you do own the *Scripture* to be of *Divine Revelation*, how can you pretend to set up any *Certain Authority* in Comparison with it ?

VI. If this *Certain Authority* be only to lead us into the *Certain Sense* of *Scripture*, then it must be either into the *Sense* of plain Places, or of difficult and obscure : If of plain Places, then it is to kindle a Torch to behold the Sun ; if of obscure Places, then who hath appointed this *Certain Authority* to Explain them ? Who is to appoint such a *Certain Authority* in the Church, to Explain his Word, but God Himself ? And we desire to see some plain Places, that set up this *Authority* to Explain those which are obscure and doubtful. We think it our Duty to read and search the *Scripture*, and especially the *New Testament*, where we find very great Occasion for this *Certain Authority* to be mentioned. We find Churches newly settled, and many Disputes and Controversies started among them ; and those of great and dangerous Consequence ; we find the Apostles giving frequent Advice to these Churches with respect to these Differences, and with great earnestness giving Caution against Seducers, and warning them of the danger of them ; but not one

Word

Word can we find in all their Epistles tending this way, or mentioning any *Certain Authority* they were to submit to, for the putting an End to all Controversies. This is really a Matter of so much Concernment to the whole Christian World, that if any such thing had been in the Design of Christianity, I can never believe that the Apostles would have omitted it in their several Epistles. Had not they sufficient Care of the *Certainty* of Mens Minds, and of the Peace of the Church? Was it a *Secret* concealed then from them? Or not thought fit to be communicated by them, when it was most necessary to prevent the early Corruptions and Errors of the Christian Churches? But they are so far from it, that I cannot find any Intimation to that purpose in all their Writings, although they had the fairest Occasions for it.

VII. If Men by *Certain Reason* have found out this *Certain Authority*, What are they to do with this *Certain Reason* afterwards? Methinks it is a little hard for ever to discharge so useful a Servant immediately after so extraordinary a piece of Service, as the finding out an *Infallible Guide*. We do not find the Apostles directing the People not to make use of their Understandings, because their Guides were Infallible. I am apt to think the Apostles were as *Infallible* as *Tradition* or *Church-Authority* ever since; and therefore what allowance was made by them to a *Judgment of Discretion* is still to continue. What doth St. Paul mean to speak to the *Corinthians* in such a manner, *I speak as to* ^{1 Cor. 10.}
Wise Men, judge ye what I say: How different is this ^{15.}
from, I speak by an Infallible Spirit, and ye are not to judge what I say? When he saith to the *Thessalonians*, *Prove* ^{1 Thes. 5.}
all things, Doth he mean, Swallow all things, and Prove ^{21.}
nothing? When St. John saith, *Try the Spirits, whether* ^{1 Joh. 4. 1.}
they

they are of God, Doth he only mean, till they had found a Certain Authority ? Did not they believe St. *John's* Authority to be Certain ? If not, to what purpose did he write this Epistle to them ? If he did, he supposed them still to have a liberty of Judging, even those who pretended to Inspiration. *For, many false Prophets are gone out into the world.* And there are certain Rules and Marks to judge of the Pretences to an Infallible Spirit, which were in vain assigned, if they were not to judge by them.

VIII. Suppose Men differ about this *Certain Authority*, wherein it lies, and how far it extends ; Are not they to exercise their *Reason* still about this ? Suppose some pretend, that it lies in an *Infallible Assistance* which Christ hath promised to his Church in all Ages ; and Others say, this is impossible to be a Ground of Faith, because it is it self an Article of Faith : Must not a Man exercise his Reason about this ? Here is *Certain Authority* pleaded ; but Others say, there is *Certain Reason* against this Pretence of *Certain Authority* ; and they must grant I must follow *Certain Reason*, though against *Certain Authority*. Again, Others say, the *Certain Authority* of *Oral Tradition* is a Novel, vain and dangerous Opinion, *destructive of Faith*, and leading to *Heresie* and *Atheism* ; What is to be done in this Case ? Must our Reason be quitted, and Men not be allowed to judge of this *Authority* by it ? Yes, *till they come to own it, and then they are to judge no longer ; i. e.* put out your Eyes once, and ye need never think of opening them after. Be very circumspect in the Choice of your Way, till you come to a *Precipice*, and when you are come there, be sure to throw your self from it head-long, and there is an *End of Controversies*. But we do
not

not judge this a very Reasonable Method; but think he had much better keep upon plain Ground, and use the best Method he can to find the true Way; and if his Judgment, will serve him to find the *Way* to a *Precipice*, we think it will much better serve him to keep him from it; And that he had better bear with some imperfection of his Sight, than put out his Eyes that he may be the more quietly led, he knows not whither.

There is only one thing more, which deserves to be taken notice of, about this Argument, *viz.* that *J. S.* saith, *I expressly exclude the Churches Help*; which is, as he triumphantly concludes his Third Letter, *The First Principle, nay the Quintessence of all Heresie, Fanaticism in the Egg, perfect Enthusiasm when hatcht, and downright Atheism when fledg'd.* This is a parting Blow indeed. It is the bite of an Angry Viper, at its last Gasps, when it puts its utmost force into the Venom, and hopes even dying to destroy. Others love to conclude gently, but *J. S.* is a Man by himself, and as though he were writing Epigrams, would reserve his Sting for the last. But what Ground is there for all this venomous Froth? Even just as much as there was for the Author of *Pax vobis* to say, *that I am for introducing Paganism*; or for another to make me *the Founder of Anti-Catholick, and Anti Christian Doctrines*, whereas I profess to own no other than what have been received in this Church ever since the Reformation. But some Mens Spleen and Gall must have a Vent lest it destroy them. It is some satisfaction to me to think that none but such, who either *Oppose or Betray* our Church, set themselves thus to defame me; and it is a great comfort to find such feeble Reasoning; where so much Spite and Malice is discover'd. Thus

Third Letter. Page,
104.

2d. Letter, p. 21.

it is here, with *J. S.* he could merit nothing without giving me hard words, and because many look on the Beginning and End of a Book, who mind nothing else in it; therefore he hath here put together as the Consequence of my Doctrine, no less than *Heressie, Fanaticism, Enthusiasm, and downright Atheism*. He thought he could not make my Case Equal with his own, unless I were charged with *Heressie*, and *Principles leading to Atheism*. But he is charged by the most *Zealous Catholicks*, and in respect to his avowed Principles; but my charge here is by an enraged Adversary; and for such a Doctrine which is owned by all Men of Understanding in both Churches, and if I may name him among them, even by *J. S.* himself. My words are, *If it be said, that the Churches Power will become explicit to any sober Enquirer, then every such Person may without the Churches help find out all necessary Points of Faith*. And where lies the *Heressie*, the *Enthusiasm*, the *Atheism* of this Doctrine, which I have already shewed was asserted both by Fathers and School-men? And *J. S.* himself grants, that every Man is to judge for his own Salvation; and of the best way to his Salvation, and of all the Controversies between them and us, and especially of the true Grounds of Faith; and all this without the Churches help. And if he can do all this, I desire to know whether he cannot find out all Necessary Points of Faith? Hath he indeed, resolved all Controversies, and yet wants some necessary Points of Faith? And hath he found out the Churches Authority too, without the Churches Help, and yet doth he want some necessary Points of Faith? Then it follows, that after the submitting to the Churches Authority, there are still necessary Points of Faith which may be wanting; and then an absolute Submission

mission is not all that is required of one that hath found out the Churches Authority. But my whole Argument there proceeds upon a Supposition, *viz.* that if one may without the Churches Help find out the Churches Authority in Scripture, then why not all necessary Points of Faith? So that it goes upon a Parity of Reason; and I see no Answer at all given or pretended, but only he endeavours to stop my Mouth with a handful of Dirt.

Thus I have dispatched this long Argument about the *Judgment of Discretion*. And I shall now sum up my Answer in these particulars.

I. Every Christian, as such, is bound to enquire after the true Way to Salvation, and hath a Capacity of Judging concerning it.

II. Every Christian proceeding according to the best Rules of judging, hath Reason to receive the Scripture as the Rule of his Faith.

III. The Scripture is so plain in all Necessaries, and God hath promised such Assistance to them, that sincerely seek it, that none who do so, shall want the knowledge of such things as are necessary to their Salvation.

IV. When any thing is offer'd as necessary to be believed in order to Salvation, every Christian hath a Right and Liberty of Judging, whether it can be proved by the Scripture to be so necessary or not.

V. We do not allow to particular Persons the same Faculty of Judging in doubtful Points of Controversie, which we do as to Matters that immediately concern their Salvation.

VI. No pretence of Infallibility or Authority can take away that Right of Judging, which was allowed them by the Apostles, whose Authority was Infallible.

VII. This Right of Judging doth not exclude the Churches due Authority as to Matters of Faith and Controversies of Religion, (as it is declared *Art. 20.* of our Church) but all that we now plead for, is (not any Authority as to others) but a Right of Judging as to themselves, in Matters that concern their Salvation.

VIII. The Certainty of Faith, as to them depends upon two Things; 1. The clearness of Scripture about them, which implies the *Certainty of Reason.* 2. The Promise of Divine Assistance which makes their *Faith Divine*, both as to its *Principle*, its *Ground*, and its *Effect*.

But I have not yet ended his *Objections* about our Rule of Faith; For

Third Letter.
Page,
34.

VI. He objects, *That we cannot necessarily resolve our Faith into the Writings of the Apostles only.* What is the meaning *that we cannot necessarily resolve it?* I think we must Resolve it into a Written Rule, till we see another proved.

Did the Apostles when they went to convert the World, go with Books in their Hands, or Words in their Mouths? Doubtless, with Words in their Mouths. Or were those Words a jot less Sacred, when they came from their Mouths, than when they put them in a Book? Not one jot. Or lastly, doth any Command from Christ appear to write the Book of Scripture, or any Revelation before hand, that it was to be a Rule of Faith to the future Church? No such matter; and the Accidental Occasions of its writing

writing at first, and its Acceptation afterwards bar any such pretences. On the other side, their grand Commission was not scribe, but only prædicate Evangelium.

I have given an Account so lately of the Reasons and Occasions of writing the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament, that I need only here to give these general Answers.

I. Whatsoever was done as to the Writing the Books of the New Testament, was done by the immediate Direction and Appointment of the Holy Ghost.

*Luke, 1. 4.
Job. 20. 31*

II. The Reason given, by the Writers of the Gospels themselves, is, that Matters of Faith might be delivered with the greatest Certainty.

III. Those Writings were not intended only for the Benefit of the Church then being, but for future Ages; and thence the Books of Scripture were so received and esteemed in the Primitive Churches.

IV. The most Antient Writers of the Christian Church assure us, that the Apostles wrote the same Doctrine they taught, and for that purpose, that they might be a Pillar and Foundation of Faith.

V. The most certain way we now have to know what Doctrine the Apostles taught is by their Writings; since they taught and wrote the same Doctrine; and we are certain we have the Doctrine they wrote, but we have no other Way to be certain what Doctrine they taught.

VII. He objects, *That the Question being put concerning the New Testament's containing all Divine Revelations of Christ and his Apostles, I gave no direct Answer, but shuffled it off to Matters necessary to Salvation.* The setting out of this is the Subject of some pages. To which I give an easie Answer.

*Third Letter, P. 33.
39, 40.*

The Question concerning the New Testament containing all the Divine Revelations of Christ and his Apostles, may be taken in two Senses.

1. As relating to the *entire Object* of Faith ; and so the Answer was most direct and plain , to the second Question, "That the Rule, whereby we hold all the same " Doctrine, that was taught by Christ and his Apostles, " is by the Divine Revelations contained in the Writings " of the New Testament. For since we believe all that is there, and nothing but what is there, that must contain the Entire Object of our Faith. And the word *All* must relate to that.

2. As to all those things which particular Persons are bound to believe, as contained therein ; and so the Question being put , about the *Universal Testimony* to assure us, i. e. all particular Christians , *That the New Testament contained all the Divine Revelations of Christ and his Apostles* : My Answer was direct and apposite to this Sense, viz. that the Universal Testimony of the Christian Church , as to the Book of Scripture, and the Doctrine therein contained, is a sufficient Ground to make us certain , i. e. all particular Persons, of all Matters necessary to our Salvation. So that the Substance of my Answer lies in these three things.

I. That all our Faith is contained in Scripture ; and thereby we hold all the Doctrine taught by Christ and his Apostles.

II. That although all particular Persons may not reach to the entire Object of Faith contained in Scripture, yet they had thereby a Certainty , as to all Matters necessary to their Salvation.

III. That

III. That the Ground of Certainty as to both these, was the Universal Testimony of the Christian Church, concerning the Books of Scripture, and the Doctrine contained therein.

The Words of my Letter are, " We are to consider, *Second Letter, P. 17.*
 " that the Scripture being our sole and entire Rule of
 " Faith, all Matters necessary to Salvation, must be
 " supposed to be contained therein; and therefore the
 " same Testimony, which delivers the Scripture to us,
 " doth deliver all the necessary Articles as contained
 " therein. Which are there received as in the Lump;
 " and if we receive the Book which contains all, we
 " must by the same Authority receive all contained in
 " it. As if a Purse be left to a Man by his Fathers
 " Will, full of Gold and Silver, and this by the Exe-
 " cutors be declared to contain all the Gold and Silver
 " his Father left him they who deliver this Purse to him
 " from the Executors, do certainly deliver to him all
 " the Gold and Silver left him by his Father. But if
 " he suspects there was both Gold and Silver left him
 " by his Father, which was not in that Purse, then he
 " must call in Question the Integrity of the Executors,
 " who declared that all was contained therein. This
 " is now the Case of the Christian Church, as to all
 " Divine Truths which respect Mens Salvation; the
 " Primitive Church, who answer to the Executors in
 " the other Case, did unanimously declare that all
 " such Truths were undoubtedly contained in the
 " Written Word. Although therefore there may be a
 " real Difference in the nature of the Doctrines therein
 " contained, as there is between Gold and Silver, yet
 " he that receives all, must receive one as well as the
 " other; and the Matters of Salvation, being of
 " L 2 "greatest

“greatest Moment, they that receive the whole Will
 “of God upon Grounds of Certainty, must be assured
 “that therein they receive all Matters necessary to our
 “Salvation.

Third Letter,
 p. 40.

Never was any Purse so rifled as this is by J. S. he examines not only the Coin in it, but the very *Strings* and *Linings* of it. He is a dreadful Man at Ransacking a Metaphor. He tells me, *My Similitude is so far from running on four Legs, that it is in many regards lame on the right (and indeed only) foot it ought to stand on ; and which is worse, perhaps against my self. The sum of it amounts to this, that because Scripture contains all, and Protestants have Scripture, therefore they have all. A strange kind of Discourse ! As if, because they have it in a Book, therefore they have it in their Minds and Souls, in which, and nowhere else Faith is to reside.*

But was not the Question put, whether we had *All the Points of Faith which our Saviour taught* ? And how could I answer a Question about *All*, but by shewing where we had *All* ? If All the Doctrine of Christ be there, we must be certain we have all, if we have the Scripture which contains all. *But it is not enough to have it in a Book.* I grant it. But still if you ask, *where all my Faith is contained* ; I must refer you to that Book which contains All. For I profess to believe every thing there, and nothing as a Point of Faith, but what is there. We do not pretend, that it is enough for Persons to say, their Faith is in such a Book ; but we grant that they ought to read and search, and actually believe what ever they find in that Book ; but still all Points are not equally necessary to all Persons that are therein contained, but all such as are necessary to Salvation lie there
 open

open to the Capacities of all who desire to know them.

Now this is one of the things J. S. finds fault with this similitude of a Purse for, *viz. That People think it is an easie thing to open, and as easie to come at the Sense of Scripture, as to take Money out of a Purse: 'Tis but plucking the Strings, and the Deed is done.* And is this any Disparagement to a Rule of Faith to be plain and easie? If it were not so, it could not be a Rule of Faith for all Persons. We do not say, that any Person by opening the Scriptures, may presently attain to the Certain Sense of all Places of Scripture; but that which I assert, is, That no Man who sets himself to read and consider the Scriptures as he ought, and prays for Wisdom from God, shall miss of knowing all things necessary to his Salvation. But Mr. S. is for mending the Similitude, and truly he doth it after an extraordinary manner. *He will allow the Scripture to be a Purse, provided the Purse's Mouth were tied up with a Knot of such a mysterious contrivance, that none could open it but those who knew the Mind of the Bequeather; and that the Church, to which it was left as a Legacy, had knowledge of his Mind, and so could open it, whilst Others only perplexed themselves more while they went about it.*

The Point then between Us, is, whether the Scripture were left only to the Church to Interpret it to the People in all Points; or whether it were intended for the general good of the whole Church, so as thereby to direct themselves in their Way to Heaven; and consequently, whether it may not be opened and understood by all Persons in Matters that are necessary to their Salvation.

One would think by the Church of Romes management of the Scripture, keeping it so much out of the Peoples

Peoples hands, and talking so much of the Danger and Mischiefe that comes by it, that they did esteem it just as the Old *Romans* did the *Sybillin* Oracles, which were to be kept up from the view of the People, and only to be consulted in Cases of great Difficulty, and no farther Questions were to be asked, but what the Keepers of them declared to be their meaning, was to be so received without any farther Examination. And this is the Sense of the Politicians of that Church, concerning the Scripture.

But when they have written like *Divines*, and have been driven to state the Controversie truly, they have been forced to such Concessions, as have overthrown the *Political Hypothesis*. For,

I. They cannot deny, that the Scripture was designed to be a Certain and Infallible Rule of Faith to all. This *Bellarmin* proves in the beginning of his Controversies; where he shews at large, That the Law was the Rule in the *Old Testament*. *To the Law, and to the Testimony. Blessed are they that search thy Commandments, &c.* That in the *New Testament* Christ proves his Doctrine by the Scriptures, and refers the Pharisees to the Scriptures, and confuted the Sadduces out of them. That the Apostles direct Christians to honour, and esteem, and to rely upon them. And then he proves, that a Rule of Faith must be Certain and Known; and for the Scriptures, he saith, *Nihil est Notius, nihil Certius*. Nothing is more Known, nothing more Certain. How can this be, if there be such *Mystical Knots* which tie it together, that none but the Church-Guides can unloose? How can this then ever be so Known, as to be a Rule of Faith to the People? And not merely a Rule, but a most Certain and Safe Rule. Which

*Bell. de
Verbo Dei
l. 1. 2.*

Which is the greatest Non-sense in the World, if it cannot be understood by those, who are to make it their Rule. They may as well say, That *Algebra* was a Rule for Masons and Carpenters, and a *Jacob's Staff* for a Taylor's Measure.

But Mr. S. hath beaten his Brains so long about *Rules* and *Rulers*, and that which is *ruled* and *regulated* by them, that we must not expect that he should be tied down to Cardinal *Bellarmin's* Notions; and therefore I must consider what he saith, after above Twenty years hard labour about these things.

He tells me plainly, I quite mistake the meaning of the word Rule. For (saith he) it speaks Rectitude. No doubt a Right Rule doth. But still I mistake his meaning. How so? There must be a Rectitude in the Rule. That is not it. What then? It must be evident Rectitude, i. e. Evident to be Right. Not so. I hope we shall come at it at last. It is such an Evident Rectitude as preserves those who regulate themselves by it from Obliquity or Deviation, that is, in our Case, from Error. And is this the wonderful Mystery? There wants but one Word to make it past dispute, viz. who effectually regulate themselves by it. For *Regulating* is an ambiguous Word, and may be taken, either 1. For what a Man takes and professes to be his Rule which he is to act by; so a *Ciceronian* regulates himself by *Cicero*, i. e. he declares his Manner of Speech to be the Rule he orders his Speech by. And yet it is very possible that such a Man may use Phrases which are not *Cicero's*, for want of sufficient Skill and Care. 2. For what he doth in Conformity to his Rule. And so he doth *Regulate* himself by *Cicero*, who doth not in the least swerve from his Manner of Speaking. But *Cicero* is the Rule to both these. And so the Question here comes to this, Whether

ther that can be said to be a true Intellectual Rule, which Men through their own default, and not through any defect in the Rule, may deviate from? If a Rule be in it self Certain, and be certainly received for a Rule, that is surely enough to make it a Rule to a Man; but it is not necessary to the being of a Rule, that a Man can never deviate from it by his own Fault. For, there is no Intellectual Rule can be assigned, but it is possible for a free Agent to deviate from; although he do at the same time profess it to be his Rule. Do not all Christians agree the Commands of Christ to be an Infallible Rule of Life? And J. S. by his admirable Logick will either prove this not to be a Rule, or that it is impossible for Men to Sin. For, saith he, *A Rule speaks Rectitude, and that such an evident one as preserves those who regulate themselves by it from Obliquity or Deviation.* Yes, saith he, this is very plain, those who Regulate themselves by Christ's Rule, cannot Sin; I grant it, those who do effectually Regulate themselves by it; but Others may profess this to be their Rule, and the most Infallible Rule of Life, and yet through their own Fault may deviate from it. So here Persons may own the Scripture to be a most Certain & Infallible Rule as to Truth and Falshood; and they are sure while they effectually regulate themselves by it, they can never Err; but while they profess to do it, they may. So that all Mr. S's Subtilty vanishes into nothing, by so plain and easie a Distinction. Therefore I am still of the mind, that a Rule of Faith is that whereby we are to judge what we are bound to believe as to Divine Revelations. No, saith J. S. I ought to have said, *It is that by which, while we follow it, we shall be absolutely secured from erring in Faith.* This follows from the *Rectitude* of the Rule, that while Men keep to it, they cannot Err; but

but it doth not follow from the Nature of the Rule, that Men must necessarily follow it. For is it possible for Men to misunderstand a Certain Rule or not? *i.e.* such a Rule which if they truly follow, they shall be secured from Erring : If not, then the Rule must be plain and evident to all Capacities, to such a degree, that they cannot fail in judging by it. If it be possible, then, although the Rule be in it self Certain and Infallible, yet it is possible for Men to Err through such a Mistake, and while they think they follow the Rule, they may run into Errour. And it is strange to me, that Mr. S. in all this time hath not discerned the Fallacy that hath misled him. If it hath really misled him, and not been set up by him, on purpose to Confound and Confute Hereticks, as he tells the Cardinals at Rome. But one of that Number hath fully proved, as I have shewed already, that the Scripture was intended for a Rule of Faith to the People ; and then it follows from J. S. himself, that while they Regulate themselves by it, they can never Err. What Reason then can be given, why such a Rule of Faith should be kept from them ? And the Purse be tied up with so many Myste-rious Knots, which are utterly inconsistent with the Notion of a Rule of Faith.

II. They grant, that there is a great difference in the Points contained in Scripture ; of which some are allowed to be *simply necessary to Salvation* ; as those which are required to Baptism ; and Bellarmin yields, *That all these Points are certainly contained in Scrip- ture ; and were the things which the Apostles constantly preached to all People.* Who cannot be denied to have been capable of Understanding these things, when they heard them preached ; and how could they lose the

Bellar. de
Verbo Dei,
l. 4. c. 11.

Capacity of Understanding them when they were written? And if they might still Understand them, then the Scripture hath no such *Mysterious Knots*, but all Points necessary to Salvation may be understood by the People. So that as to these Points of greatest Importance, the Scripture must be left as a Legacy to all Christians, and not only to the Guides of the Church.

Third Letter, P. 41.

But J. S. craves leave to Explain himself; and it is great pity to deny it him. *Mistake me not*, saith he, *I do not mean Scriptures Letter is not clear in such Passages as concern Morality, or the X Commandments; nor in Matters of Fact, as the Marks or Signs of the Messias foretold by the Prophets; (Methinks the Mysterious Knots should have been about Prophecies,) nor in Parables explained by himself and such like; but in Dogmatical Points or Tenets, which are Spiritual, and oftentimes profound Mysteries, as a Trinity, Christ's Godhead, the Real Presence of his Body in the Sacrament, and such like; and in such as these our Rule is not intelligible enough to keep the Followers of it from Erring.* I Answer, Either the Apostles Preached these Points to all Persons as *necessary to their Salvation*, or they did not. If not, how come they to be *necessary* to be believed now? If they did, then the People were capable of Understanding them when they heard them, and therefore may as well understand them when they read them. I do not mean the *Manner* as to the *Trinity* and *Incarnation* (as to *Transubstantiation*, I know nothing in Scripture about it either as to *Thing* or *Manner*) but the Revelation of such a Doctrine. So that if these Points be owned to be *necessary to Salvation*, they must be so plain that Men may understand their Duty to believe them. For, that is the Bound I keep my self within, that all things Necessary to Salvation, are so plain, that we may be certain
of

of our Duty to believe them ; but if not, we may Err without Prejudice to our Salvation.

Mr S. asks *what I mean by all things necessary to Salvation.* Nothing but what all others do mean by it. Pag. 48.

Did Christ (saith he) teach any unnecessary Points ?

Alas for him ! But are all Points taught by Christ, or written in Scripture, equally necessary to the Salvation of all People ? No, he saith presently after, *That he will grant that fewer means than the Knowledge of all Christ taught, may suffice for the Salvation of some particular Persons.*

Very well ; now I hope he will make something of the main business in hand, *viz.* To prove that Absolute Certainty of all that Christ Taught, is Necessary to Mens Salvation, when he grants that some may be Saved, without so much as *Knowing all that Christ Taught.* To what purpose was all this Heat about the Certainty of our Faith, as to all that Christ Taught, if at last some may be Saved without so much as Knowing it ? How doth Mr. S. prove, That those *some* are only the Ignorant People in the Church of Rome ; but that all Ours are tied to no less than Infal-
 lible Certainty of all that Christ Taught. He would have done well, to have proved such a Privilege for Ignorance to have been limited to their Communion ; and that no Claim can be allowed as to the Circumstances of any other particular Persons.

Some few (he saith again) *may be Saved without the Knowledge of such and such Points, slender Motives being enough for their Circumstances.* I thank Mr. S. for this. It seems the Point as to *Salvation* is gained, unless particular Persons among us can be proved to be none of these few. But where-
 ever they are, it seems *they may be Saved* ; but I hope, not without True and Saving Faith ; whence it follows, that such Faith hath no necessary Relation to these

high Points ; and there is no need of Infallible Certainty, as to them, of all Christ Taught. One of these high Points, is that of *Transubstantiation* ; too high for me and Thousands and Millions besides, ever to apprehend, let us do our utmost ; nay we cannot apprehend (such is our dulness) that we can have any Certainty, as to Sense or Reason, if we hold it. We hope therefore J. S. will enlarge his Number, and not talk only of *some Few that may be Saved* without the Knowledge of such deep Mysteries ; we desire to be admitted into his Number, for truly our Capacities can never be stretched so far, as to comprehend the Possibility of *Transubstantiation*. Suppose *our Motives be slender*, yet they are such as move us to that degree, that we cannot overcome the Reluctancies of Sense, and Reason, and Revelation, and Tradition against it.

Ibid.

But Mr. S. brings himself off with a *Salvo* ; *Though all Points are not necessary for every particular Person, yet all of them are necessary for the Body of the Church, whose Pastors are to Instruct their Children in them, and apply the Efficacy of them to their Souls, as their Capacities admit, and Exigencies require.* It seems still they are not Necessary to particular Persons, but according to their Capacities and Exigencies, but *they are to the Body of the Church.* But how came they to be Necessary to the Body of the Church ? For Instance, The Point of *Transubstantiation* is a very deep Point ; and although particular Persons may be Saved without believing it, yet I cannot understand how this deep Point comes to be Necessary, in any Respect, for the Body of the Church. I hope J. S. will not deny this to be one of his Necessary Church-Points : Let him then shew, how it comes to be so *Necessary for the Pastors of the Church to Instruct their Children in it.* My Capacity, I assure him, will

will not reach to this, and therefore I hope I may be excused; and in his own words, my mind is not capable of *being cultivated by such elevating Considerations*. I do not believe there is any such danger of *the Flocks dying, or falling short of their full growth they might have had in the Plentiful Pasturage of the Church*, as J. S. elegantly speaks, if they do not believe *Transubstantiation*, or any such deep Points.

Page 49.

But still we have no *Absolute Certainty* of our highest *Fundamentals*. No? We affirm the Contrary; and from Absolutely Certain Grounds. It is *Absolutely Certain*, that whatever God Reveals is true, and ought to be believed by us. And we are, as absolutely Certain as Scripture and Reason can make us, that God hath Revealed the Fundamentals of our Faith. *But there is Experience to the Contrary*. What Experience? That we are not Certain? We affirm that we are; and who can tell best? How comes Mr. S. to know we are not Certain when we say we are? *But all are not, as Socinians, &c.* What are they to us? Are not we certain, because some are not Certain? What pitiiful Reasoning is this? Is Mr. S. Certain of his *Infallible Ground of Certainty, Oral Tradition*? *Why do I ask such a Question*? For very good Reason; because there are some not Certain of it, and even in his own Church; but cry out upon it, as Fallible, Fallacious, Dangerous, and Destructive of Faith, and leading to Atheism. From whence it follows, on Mr. S's. Principles, that he cannot be Certain himself, because others are not. Nay, it is impossible he should have any Certainty on his own Grounds. For he can have no Rule of Certainty, as I shall evidently prove from his own Words. A Rule must have *Absolute Certainty*; Absolute Certainty there cannot be where Persons are left uncertain;

but

but there are many in the Church of *Rome*, that not only doubt of his Rule of Infallible Certainty, but utterly deny it, and dispute against it. How is it then possible, for him to be certain of it on his own Grounds?

But it is time to proceed to another Objection against our Rule of Faith.

Third Letter.
Page,
50.

VIII. *J. S.* saith, *We can be no more certain of our Rule, than we are of the Truth of the Letter of Scripture; but we cannot be certain we have the Right Letter, unless we have a Right Translation, and that must be from a true Copy; no Copy can be true, unless Conformable to the Original; and if there be any failure in any of these, nay, if we have not absolute Certainty of all these, we cannot have any absolute Certainty of our Faith.*

Page 51.

This Objection, those of the Church of *Rome*, who believe Scripture to be a Rule of Faith, (though not the Complete) are concerned to Answer, as well as we. For, the Matters of Faith contained in Scripture are convey'd to their Minds after the same manner. But *Mr. S.* saith *Their Case is different from ours.* Do not they make the *Vulgar Translation Authentick*? And will not the same Objections then lie against all those who rely upon it? Let us see how *J. S.* clears this Matter:
1. *The Canon of the Books comes down*, saith he, *by the Testimony of all Christian Churches, that are truly Christian.* And we say, the Canon of the Books comes down by the Concurrent Testimony of all Christian Churches, however differing in other things. And herein, I think, we have much the advantage. For, we do not except against the Testimony of any Christian Churches; nor condemn them as not truly Christian till their Cause be better heard and examin'd.
2. *The Doctrine of Christ*, saith he, *transfused into the hearts*

hearts of the faithful, both taught them how, and obliged them to correct the Copy in those particular Texts that concerned Faith. What is this, but in plain terms to expose the Scriptures to the Scorn and Contempt of Atheists and Infidels? Who would desire no better a Concession than this, that the Scripture hath been corrected in Matters of Faith, according to the Faith of the Church. If this be granted, it is impossible to prove that we have any true Original Texts, *in Matters of Faith*: For if the Church did correct the Copy in those particular Texts, which concerned Faith, according to the Sense of the faithful; then the Church in every Age might so correct it: and consequently we can never be sure, that the Texts continue the same for any two Ages together; unless it be first proved impossible for the Sense of the Church to vary in any two Ages; or of those who think themselves bound to correct the Texts. And I should be very sorry to have my Faith rest upon such a slippery Foundation. I will put the Case, as to the *Arian Controversy*. How was it possible for the *Nicene Fathers* to have convinced the *Arians* on such a Supposition as this? "You alledge
 "several Texts of Scripture, might they say, to prove
 "the Godhead of Christ, and his Equality with the
 "Father; but how can we know that these were Original Texts, and not corrected by the Guides of the
 "Church then, according to their own Sense? We
 "do not deny that there were some leading Men of this
 "Opinion, and having gained a Party to themselves,
 "they corrected the *Texts* according to it: And therefore we can never be satisfied, that these were the
 "Original Texts, because we can bring down a Tradition of a contrary Sense from the Apostles times. I do not see what satisfaction they could ever receive, if

if this pernicious Principle be allowed, that the Texts were to be corrected in Matters that concern Faith, according to the Sense of the Church. But he saith it is, *If any Error, through the carelesness, unattentiveness, or malice of the Translators, or Transcribers at any time had crept in.* This doth not one jot mend the Matter. For if the Faith of the present Church be the Rule, then the Texts are to be corrected according to it, and the blame to be laid on the Carelesness or Malice of Translators and Transcribers. This is a miserable Account of the *Certainty of Texts of Scripture in Points of Faith*; As to other Texts of inferiour concern, as he speaks, *they could be best corrected, by multitudes of other ancient Copies, the Churches Care still going along, as was shewn in the highest manner, by the Council of Trent, that so it might be as exact as Human Diligence could well render it.* As to multitudes of Copies they serve us as well as them; but as to the Care of the Council of Trent, I am by no means satisfied. For 1. They went no farther than a Translation, and declared that Authentick; without due regard to the Original Text. 2. The Care taken was not so exact; for then *Clemens* the Eighth did great Injury to *Sixtus* the Fifth, when he recalled and corrected his Bibles in so many Places after *Sixtus* the Fifth, had published his for an Exact Edition. 3. There are still complaints in the Church of Rome of want of Exactness in the Vulgar Latin. 4. After all this is but *Human Diligence*, and no such *Absolute Certainty*, as *J. S.* requires from us.

But it may be, he will say, *That he doth not at all make it his Rule of Faith*; Let him declare so much; and then we know what to Answer. *This is still putting off.* Therefore I will give a distinct Answer.

I. We

I. We do utterly deny that it is in any Churches Power to correct *Original Texts*, because they contradict the Sense of the present Church; or any Translations any farther, than they differ from the Originals. And I do not know any assertion that shakes more our Faith, as to the Scripture, than this of J. S. doth.

II: The early Appeals made to *Scripture* in Matters of Faith, by the Writers of the Christian Church, make us Certain that there could be no such *Alterations* or *Corrections* of the Texts, according to the sense of the Correctors. As for Instance, we find the Places produced against the *Arians* used before against the *Samosatzenians* and *Artemonites*.

If it be said, *They might correct the Fathers* to answer, That there is no imaginable Ground for any such suspicion; because the Fathers lived in distant Places and Countries, and therefore when their Testimonies agree about some places of Scripture alledged by them, there can be no Reason to suspect any Corruption or Alteration of the Text. As for Instance, no one Text of the whole New Testament, hath been more suspected than that of 1 S. John 5. 7. *There are three that bear Record in Heaven, &c.* And it cannot be denied, that there hath been great variety, both in the Greek and Latin Manuscripts about it; yea, there was so in S. Jeroms time, as appears by his Preface to the Canonical Epistles; who charges the leaving it out to the unfaithfulness of the Translators. S. Jerom is cried out upon as a Party in this Controversie, and therefore it is said on the other side, that he put it in as favouring his own Opinion. But his Integrity is vindicated herein, because S. Cyprian so long before the *Arian Controversie* produced this Place. So that our

S. Cyprian.
de unit.
Ep. iij. ad
Jubai.

Certainty as to Scripture doth not depend upon the meer Letter, but upon comparing the best and most antient Copies, with the Writings of the Fathers, who still made use of the Scriptures in all Discourses and Debates about Matters of Faith.

III. The *variety* of *Readings* in Matters that are not of Faith, cannot hinder our Certainty in Matters of Faith. We do not pretend, that there is no kind of variety in the Copies of the New Testament; but I am of Opinion that this rather establishes than weakens our Faith. For, considering the great Multitudes of them, and how insignificant they are, it shews that this Book was liable to the common Accidents of Books; but yet, that there is no such variety, as to make one suspect any Fraud or Design in the Alterations that appear in the Manuscript Copies. And as to Translations that have been made among us, the People who are not able to examin them by the Originals, have no Reason to suspect them, as to any Matter of Faith. Not meerly from the Skill and Integrity of the Persons, and the Care that hath been taken, but because it was so much the Concernment of some Men to have lessen'd the Credit of our Translations, as much as was possible, and they have not been able to produce any thing that might shake the Faith of a considering Man.

If it be said after all, This is but *Human Faith*, and not *Divine*; I answer,

IV. We must be careful to distinguish the Certainty of *Human* and *Divine Faith* in this Matter.. We do not pretend that we have an Absolute Divine Certainty of things that are only capable of Human Certainty; and we do not say, that we have only Human Certainty of things capable of *Divine Certainty*. If the
Question

Question be put concerning the *Objects* of *Divine Faith*, then we do answer, That we have a *Divine Certainty* of them from those things, which are the proper Evidence of Divine Revelation. We believe the Doctrine of Christ with a Divine Faith, because it was confirmed by Miracles and Prophecies: We believe the New Testament to be written by the Holy Spirit, because the Promise of the Spirit was fulfilled upon them; and especially in a thing of so great Concernment to the whole Christian Church. But if the Question be asked only concerning a Matter of Fact, as whether the Books that bear such Names were written by the Persons, whose Names they bear; then I can have no greater Certainty than belongs to a Matter of Fact; but then it is so circumstantiated, that I have a greater and more absolute Certainty, as to this, than any other Matter of Fact which wants the Proofs that this hath. And if as to Books, and Copies, and Translations, we have as high a Certainty, as the thing is capable of, it is madness to expect and require more. For where there is but a Human Testimony, there cannot be the Certainty of Divine Faith, which must not only have a Divine Object, but must rest on a Divine Testimony; but where the Testimony is *Human*, the Certainty must be such as relates to the highest of that kind. But still, such a Faith may have Absolute Certainty of its kind; and although in regard of its Testimony it be Human Faith, yet in regard both of its Object, its *inward Cause*, and its *Effects*, it may be truly called *Divine*.

IX. The last *Objection* is, concerning the *Number* of *Canonical Books*. *Pray satisfy us (saith Mr. S.) about this* Third Let.
ter, p. 58.
exact Number of Books; and how many will just serve
N 2 turn.

turn. One would think by his Objections, J. S. were preparing Matter for the *Critical History* of the *New Testament*, he seems so concerned to lessen the Authority of it. But I shall Answer the Objections he offers.

Page 56.

1. *There may have been Books lost that were written by Persons divinely inspir'd, and we have no unanimous Consent of the Christian Church that there is none lost; and those Books might contain Matters different from, or to be super-added to the Canon we have now; and without this, we can have no Certainty, that the Books we have now, contained all the Divine Revelations.* I Answer,

I. If we have the unanimous Consent of the Christian Church, that we have the Canon of the *New Testament* entire, then we have their Consent, that there is no Book, written by Divine Inspiration, lost. And this appears by the Contest in the IV. Century, about the just Number of the Canonical Books; The Churches then differ'd about some Books not then Universally receiv'd; as the *Apocalypse* in some, and the Epistle to the *Hebrews* in others. Which shews, that the Churches were then so solicitous to preserve any Books that appear'd to be written by Persons Inspir'd, that although these did then want Universal Consent, yet they were still kept, and read, and dispers'd, till upon further Examination they came to be Universally read. It is not therefore in the least probable they should suffer any Apostolical Writings to be lost.

II. This is to charge the Christian Church with so gross a Neglect, as overthrows the force of all his Arguments for Tradition. For we must suppose an Apostolical Writing sent to some Church by Direction of the Holy Spirit, and yet that Church be so notoriously

riously careless, as to lose a Book containing in it many Points of Faith ; now I appeal to any one of common Sense, whether he could trust their Word for Matters of Faith, who could be so negligent as to lose a great many Points of Faith at once. And the more such a Book were dispersed, the Argument is still stronger against *Tradition*. Besides, this shews the great Insufficiency of Oral Tradition, if these Points of Faith are lost ; because such a Book was lost, wherein they were contained. If Tradition had been so effectual a Means of Conveying Matters of Faith, it should have appear'd in such a Case, *viz.* in preserving such Matters of Faith, though the Books were lost : But we find nothing like this, so much as pretended. Although it were much easier pretended than proved.

III. This is to suppose the Providence of God not to be immediately concerned in preserving Books-written by Divine Inspiration. Mr. S. doth really suppose that Books written by Divine Inspiration may have been lost, or at least that we cannot prove that they are not : But we think it a considerable Proof, that they could not, because the Divine Providence doth so immediately concern it self in preserving that which tends so much to the Good of his Church. *If a Hair doth not fall from our Heads, nor a Sparrow fall on the Ground,* without the Providence of God (as our Saviour affirms) is it not very unreasonable to suppose that a Divine Book, written for the Benefit of the Christian Church, should be wholly lost ? Especially considering the extraordinary Care the first Christians took, in Times of the greatest Persecutions, to preserve the Scriptures ; and no force or violence could extort them out of their hands. On Mr. S's Supposition, it was no hard Mat-

Mat. 10.
29, 30.

ter

ter for a Book of Scripture to be lost, *viz.* if the several Books had been committed to the Custody of some Men in Trust for the whole Church ; but if we consider the things as they really were, it will appear hardly possible. For the Books were not kept up at first in a few hands, but dispersed abroad in multitudes of Copies, and received with mighty Veneration both on the Account of the Authors of them, and the Matters contained in them. They were read both in Publick and in Private, they heard them in their Assemblies, and they made them their constant Employment at home ; they were their Rule of Life, as well as of Faith. And how is it possible to suppose any Book so received, so esteemed, so dispersed, so constantly read, could be suffer'd to be lost among Christians ?

If it be Objected, *That they were not all so esteemed at first, as appears by the Epistle to the Hebrews, and therefore might more easily be lost ;* I Answer, That however they were not universally received at first, yet they were by those Churches to whom they were written ; and among them they were not kept up, but mightily dispersed ; so that there was no way to lose them, from the first spreading of them abroad ; unless we can suppose such multitudes of Christians to conspire together to suppress a Book of so great Concernment to themselves. As if Persons who claim an Estate by virtue of some Deeds, should all agree to imbezel them, or any material part of them. Here was no pretence for Registers and Abridgments, which some make use of to lessen the Authority of the Books of the *Old Testament* ; for here we have the very Authentick Writings of the Apostles, and their own Epistles in their own style and Expressions. And supposing the Churches, to whom they were sent, to have received them as their Writings,
and

and to have communicated them to others, as they did, I do not see, under these Circumstances, how a Book, containing Divine Revelations, could be lost.

II. He Objects, *That the Canon of Scripture was not* Page 58.
entire, but deficient for some hundreds of years, till the whole Canon was collected and acknowledged, and therefore so long the Church had no Perfect Rule of Faith.

I Answer,

I. I distinguish between a Compleat Rule of Faith, and a Compleat Canon of Scripture. For, if the Books owned and universally received, contain in them all Matters of Faith, then the Rule of Faith is Compleat, although some particular Books may be still in Dispute. As for Instance, it is certain, that in St. Jerom's Time, the Church of Rome did not receive as Canonical the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; Had not that Church therefore a Compleat Rule of Faith? If God hath so abundantly provided for his Church, that there may be a full Revelation of all Points of Faith in the rest, then the disputing the Authority of such an Epistle, doth not derogate from the Compleatness of the Rule of Faith. For, if they have all Points of Faith, they must have a Compleat Rule of Faith.

II. It is no Prejudice to the true Canon of Scripture, that some particular Books of the *New Testament* were for some time disputed by some particular Churches. For, if it were done without Ground, it doth reflect more on those Churches than on those Books; especially when those very Churches afterwards received them. And this was the Case of the Church of Rome, as to the Epistle to the *Hebrews*: St. Jerom affirms, *That not only*

*Jeronym.
ad Darda-
num.*

only the Greek Churches all received it, but that all the Ancient Writers did so ; and not meerly as an Ecclesiastical, but as a Canonical Epistle. Therefore this must be a late thing in the Church of Rome ; and in probability, began upon the *Novatian* Controversie, which Epistle was thought too much to favour the *Novatian* Doctrine; and when that *Controversie* did abate, that *Epistle* recovered its *Authority* in the Church of Rome. But Mr. S. is angry with me, for reflecting on the Church of Rome for not receiving the *Epistle to the Hebrews* in St. Jerom's Time ; which (he thinks) was an Act of Prudence, antecedent to the Judgment or Determination of any Church, whether Greek or Latin. One may see by this how well versed he is in the Canon of Scripture, when St. Jerom declares, that not only all the Greek Writers received it, but all the Ancient, and that as *Canonical*. Was here no antecedent Judgment of the Church in this Matter ? Doth not the Consent of all Ancient Writers, even in St. Jerom's Time, make a Judgment of the Church ? But he adds, *That what I make a heinous Crime in the Church of Rome, was a commendable Caution in it.* That which I said, was, That it hence appear'd, that the Church of Rome was far from being believed then to have the Authority of making the Canon of Scripture, or being Infallible in Faith. And what saith J. S. in Answer to this ? Not one Syllable, but runs it off to another thing.

*Third Letter,
p. 57.*

But why do I not as well blame the Greek Churches for not receiving the Apocalypse ? They do not pretend to such Authority and Infallibility in this Matter, as the Church of Rome doth. I do not deny that there were some Greeks then to blame in rejecting the Apocalypse, but Bellarmin saith, they were but few and obscure Persons ; and he produces the Testimonies of
Justin

Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Theophilus Antiochenus, Melito Sardinensis, Dionysius Alexandrinus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen and Athanasius, all approving it. And the Occasion of disputing it arose from the Millenary Opinion, which some thought they could not confute, as long as the Apocalypse had such Authority in the Church.

And such Disputes as these, which wore off by degrees, are no real Prejudice to the Canon of the *New Testament*, which was at first generally received; and although some few Books were contested for a time, yet they recover'd their Authority, and have ever since been received by the Universal Consent of all Christian Churches.

III. He Objects against this Universal Consent, the *Testimonies of Marcion, Ebion, Valentinus, Cerinthus, and Epiphanius his other Hereticks, who rejected the Canon of the New Testament*. Could any Man but J. S. make such an Objection as this? But he had a mind to bring me in as a Favourer of all Hereticks; and, as such another Man of Integrity hath done, of all *Anti-Catholick and Anti-Christian Doctrines*. But where have I given any Occasion for such spiteful Reflections? All that I said, was, We have the Universal Consent of all Christian Churches for the Canon of the *New Testament*, i.e. Of all since the time, that the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was receiv'd in the Latin, and the *Apocalypse* in the Greek Churches; notwithstanding all the Divisions they have since fallen into, yet they had no Difference as to the Canon of the *New Testament*. And this I insisted on as the Ground of our Certainty, viz. The Unanimous Consent of all the great Bodies of Christians, that have continued under different Denominations to this day.

Third Letter,
117, P. 59.

Page 74.

To this he gives no other Answer, *but that my Answer to the Fifth Question, is co-incident with that to the Fourth.* I thought J. S. in the Self-evident way, would have liked my Answer the better for it. But he doth not comprehend the design of it. I had said before, That we relied on the Universal Testimony of the Christian Church; upon that the Question was asked, What I meant by the Christian Church. My Answer was, *That it was that which was made up of all Christian Churches; i. e. saith J. S. That all the Parts make the Whole;* and what Incongruity is there? When Mr. G. said, That the Christian Church may be taken in several Latitudes, he desired to know in what Sense I took it; and could I answer him more directly than to tell him, I took it in the largest Sense, as it was made up of all the Parts; and not in such a Sense as they do; who give the Denomination of the Whole to a Part? *But by this I do not exclude all Hereticks.* I do

Page 75.

not take upon me to judge of all the Bodies of Christians in the World, whether they be justly charged with Heresie or not; but I take them only as Christians, and from their Universal Consent, I prove the Certainty of the Canon of Scripture. *Hereby I profess a Brotherhood with Excrementitious Outcasts.* I know not what Brotherhood lies in making use of their Testimony; but I had rather do it, than with unsufferable Pride and Folly call so many Bodies of Christians; for whom Christ died, *Excrementitious Outcasts.* But although he seems to own that their Testimony doth strengthen the Evidence for the Canon of the *New Testament*; yet he calls it back again, and for extraordinary Reasons. *1. They may have corrupted the Letter of Scripture, although they may allow of the Books.* Let us then take their Testimony for the Books, and examine the Letter afterwards.

Page 76.

wards. 2. *This Universal Testimony must reach to each Chapter and Verse; but we must have Assurance not only of each Verse, but of each significant Word in the Verse.* How hardly are some Men satisfied about the Certainty of Scripture! Are there not different Copies in all Parts to examine and compare, if there be cause of Mistrust; and if there be none, What Prejudice is this to our Certainty? At this rate, Men may argue against every thing; and that there can be no Certainty of any Writing, unless the Person stood by and saw the Author write; and even then he might question his Senses too. These Objections do indeed lead to an incurable Scepticism in the Church of Rome. 3. *The* Page 76.

Judges suspect the Justice of the Cause, if known Knights of the Post are called in to corroborate the Evidence. What a desperate Cause is that, which forces Men to sling such Dirt in the Face of so many Christian Churches? And that without the least Evidence or Proof against them. How come all the Greek, Abyssine, Coptick, Oriental Christians, to be compared to Knights of the Post, because they afford a Concurrent Testimony with us about the Canon of the New Testament? They may be the honestest and best Part of Christendom, for any thing J. S. knows; and what Justice can there be in such Uncharitable Censures? It is not enough for you to say, They are all accounted Hereticks or Schismaticks by you; for we that know how unjust and unreasonable your Censures are so near home, have no Cause to regard them at such a distance.

Thus I have Answered all the Objections I have met within J. S. against our Rule of Faith.

I now come to the last part of my Task, which is to examin the Arguments produced to prove the *Infallibility of Oral and Practical Tradition.*

First Letter
p. 8.

The main Argument is thus set down by Mr. S. *All Traditionary Christians believe the same to day which they did yesterday, and so up to the time of our Blessed Saviour; and if they follow this Rule, they can never err in Faith, and therefore are Infallible. And they could not innovate in Faith, unless they did forget what they held the day before, or out of malice after it.*

All the Parts of this Argument Mr. S. endeavours to shew to be *Self-evident*; but in truth it is a *Self-evident Fallacy*; as I shall shew at large. But before I particularly lay it open, I must consider what he saith against the Method I used in the Conference for answering it.

I then thought, and do still, that the clearest Answer to an Argument, which proves a thing impossible was to bring an undeniable Instance that such a thing really was, which was proved impossible to be. And to this purpose I produced *the Instance of the Greek Church, which professed to follow Tradition, and yet they could not deny to have erred.*

Page 10.

This Mr. S. saith, *Is giving no Answer at all; for this is no Answer to his Argument, but producing a new Argument against him. And he magisterially tells me, That it is my turn to answer; and therefore I am confined to Concedo, Nego or Distinguo: as the Propositions are either true, false or ambiguous, or I may deny the Inference, if I find more terms in the Conclusion than in the Premisses. But these are my Bounds which I must not exceed. But with submission to these Logicians, I answer, That where an Argument is designed to prove a thing im-*

impossible, which is contrary to Sense and Experience, the producing an evident Instance is the plainest and shortest way of Answering ; as well as in an Induction which is allowed to be disproved by a plain Instance. As in the Case of Zeno's Argument against Motion ; Diogenes his Moving was a far more effectual Answer, than if he had stood a great while with his *Concedo*, *Nego* and *Distinguo*. J. S. confesses, *That the vanity of Zeno's Argument was not ill ridiculed by Diogenes his moving before him.* And why might not I then expose the vanity of this Demonstration by the Instance of the Greek Church ; unless some fault be found in the Instance. *He brings the Argument, and I an Instance against it, what are People the wiser ? and which shall they be for ; the Argument or the Instance ?* Zeno brought his Argument, and Diogenes his Instance ; were not By-standers the wiser, when it so apparently proved the foppery of the Argument ? Doth J. S. think the vanity of it was not enough exposed by that means ? But he saith, *This is excepting against the Conclusion, when there lies none against the Premisses.* No such Matter ; for it shews there is a Fallacy in the Premisses : *It is however but an Argument, ad hominem ;* call it what you will, so it doth my business ; to shew the vanity of the Demonstration. *This way doth but sham an Adversary.* And truly that is a great matter, if they be such as P. G. *They are of no use for discovery of Truth.* As much as laying open Sophistry helps to the discovery of Truth ; which is not a little when we deal with Sophistical Disputers.

But we come to the *Instance*. How doth he after all clear this Instance of the Greek Church ? Doth he deny that they hold to Tradition ? No. Doth he deny that they have erred notwithstanding ? All that he saith

Page 13. faith is, That P. G. *was no ways obliged not to deny that the Greek Church had erred in Points of Faith.* No? then he must grant that the Roman Church hath erred, for they contradict each other. Let him take his choice; one doth my business as well as the other, and more effectually destroys the pretence of Infallibility in the Roman Church. *But I say, they did not err.* What is my saying to the business in hand? Besides, there are other Points contradictorily held between the Greek and Roman Churches, besides that of the *Filioq*; and the Argument holds as well in any other, as in that. And therefore he must fix the Error on one side or other.

After all this flourishing he takes heart, and resolves to grapple with the Instance. *Let us see what your Instance will do.* Now I thought we shall have a direct Answer. But I am strangely disappointed. For he runs still back to that, *That I do not believe it erred.* Was the Instance brought against me, or against P. G? *But his Answer doth not make or marr the business.* The business of the Demonstration it doth, and that was my business.

Page 15. *But this doth not prove that a Church going upon Tradition errs, unless I will grant that the Greek Church hath erred.* What strange Trifling is this? The Dispute was about P. G's. Argument, and not my Opinion. Is this the Answer to the Instance about the Greek Church which Mr. M. promised? If this pass for an Answer, I think J. S. may defend Sure footing. I mentioned P. G's. Answer, *That the Greek Church followed Tradition till the Arians left that Rule, and took up a new one.* And why saith J. S. hath he not answered well? Because he did not answer to the purpose; which was not about the *Arians*, but the present Greek Church. *But a Church may follow Tradition at*

one time, and leave it as another. Very true; but the Greek Church did not forsake Tradition, and yet erred. And therefore Tradition and Error were found together, and therein lies the force of this undeniable Instance. The rest is such Trifling, that I am really ashamed to answer it over and over. Still he attempts to give an Answer, and still fails; but it is something new, and therefore shall be considered. *His Answer,* Page 16.
saith J. S. holds as well as to the present as past Greek Church. His answer! Where is it? *It was that those who err in Faith must leave Tradition.* But the Greeks did not leave Tradition, and yet erred in Faith; so that the Instance holds good still. *He denies that Error and Tradition can be found together in the Greek Church, or any other Ancient or Modern, i. e. the Conclusion must be held against all the Instances in the World.* But I ought to say, *whether the differences were in matters of Faith.* Yes, in such which the Church of Rome accounts matters of Faith. *But how can an erring Church still plead Tradition and adhere to it?* Answer the Instance; for the Greek Church doth plead Tradition. *But then pleading Tradition is no more but quoting some Expressions of ancient Writers, as the Arians did:* Not so neither; for the Greek Church relies most upon Tradition from Father to Son in Practice of any Church in the World. *But if they adhere to Tradition, and that Tradition leads them to Christ, who could not err, how can they possibly err? For, pray did Christ teach any Error? No certainly. When a Father believed what Christ taught him, and the Son what the Father believed, did not the Son too believe what Christ taught? Run it on to the last Son that shall be born in the World, must not every one believe what Christ taught, if every one believed what his Father believed?*

And

Page 19. And so Goodnight to the Greek Church ; we are come back to the Argument. *I might as well have-Instanced in the Latin Church it self.* Truly I think so too ; and so you shall find in a short time ; and how little Advantage you get by such a Challenge.

Page 20. *But it is impossible for a Church to adhere to Tradition, and yet to Err ; therefore if the present Greek Church have Erred, it has not adhered to Tradition ; if it have adhered to Tradition, it hath not Erred.* That is, the Argument must be good, let the Instance be what it will. But an easie Distinction will shew the Weakness of this Argument.

Adhering to Tradition may be taken Two ways.

I. For Adhering to Tradition, as the Rule and Means of Conveyance of Matters of Faith.

II. For actually Adhering to that very Doctrine which Christ taught, and hath ever since been truly convey'd down by Tradition.

In this latter Sense we grant it impossible for Men to Err, while they actually adhere to that very Doctrine which Christ taught, and is supposed to be deliver'd down by Tradition. But this is not the Matter before us ; which lies in these Two Points.

I. Whether Tradition be an Infallible Way to convey the Doctrine of Christ down to us.

II. Whether it be impossible for those who hold to This as Their Rule, to Err or not.

And so the Answer is plain to the main Argument. If by *Traditionary Christians*, be meant such as adhere to that very Doctrine which Christ taught, and was actually

actually conveyed down to them, then such Traditionary Christians, so believing, cannot Err.

But if by Traditionary Christians be meant such as take Tradition for an Infallible Rule of conveying all Matters of Faith ; then we say such Traditionary Christians may and have Erred : And that for Two Reasons.

I. Because Tradition is no Infallible Rule.

II. Because although it were, yet Men might Err, either by mistaking it, or departing from it.

But saith J. S. *They cease to be Traditionary Christians if they do not believe the same to Day which they did Yesterday, and so up to Christ.*

Page 1.

If by Traditionary Christians be meant, they do not really believe what Christ taught, we grant it, that they are.

If by *Traditionary Christians* be meant such as bear the Name of Traditionary Christians, and look on Tradition as their Rule, and imagine they have the same Faith which Christ taught ; then they are still Traditionary Christians.

And now I am to give a clear and distinct Answer to the *Demonstration of the Infallibility of Oral Tradition*, as it is managed by J. S. and taken into Propositions.

I. *All Traditionary Christians believe the same to day which they did yesterday, and so up to the time of our Blessed Saviour.* J. S. hopes I have nothing to say to this ; but he is mistaken. For I have many things to say to lay open the Notorious Fallacy of it in every Clause.

I. *All Traditionary Christians.* Who are they ? Are all *Christians Traditionary Christians* ? This were to the purpose, if it could be proved. But how doth

this appear ? Why is it not said, *All Christians have gone upon this Principle* ? He knew this could never have been proved. And therefore he puts in the thing in dispute, and would have it taken for granted, that there were no other but *Traditionary Christians*. Which I deny, and I am certain he can never prove it. Suppose then that there were *Christians* not *Traditionary* as well as *Traditionary*, the Proposition appears ridiculous ; so far is it from Demonstration. *Traditionary Christians* believed so ; *Non-Traditionary Christians* believed otherwise ; and which are to be believed, is the Question ; and that to be determined by the Certainty of the Ground they went upon ; and so we are come to the Debate between *Scripture* and *Tradition*.

II. *All Traditionary Christians believe the same to Day which they did Yesterday*. This is capable of a threefold meaning.

I. That they do actually believe the same to Day which they did Yesterday. Which is a meer contingent thing, and proves nothing. Or,

II. That they are bound to believe to Day, as they did Yesterday. And that may be on several Accounts.

I. Because they see Evidence from the Word of God to Day as well as they did Yesterday.

II. Or because their Guides of the Church teach them the same to Day which they did Yesterday, whom they believe to be Infallible.

III. Or, meerly because they receive it by an *Oral Tradition*, and not on the other Accounts ; and then
it

it proves no more than that they are bound to do it ; and it is too well known that many fail to do what they are *bound to*.

Or III. That they do Infallibly believe the same to Day which they did Yesterday. But then this ought to have been inserted in the Proposition, That Traditionary Christians cannot fail to believe to Day what they did Yesterday. If it be said, *That this is implied in their being Traditionary Christians*, then I say, the whole is a Fallacy of *is in esse*, for he supposes all true Christians to be *Traditionary Christians*, and then that they Infallibly hold to *Tradition* as their Rule, and from thence he proves *Tradition* to be *Infallible*. But if the Body of Christians may go upon another Rule, or if going upon Tradition, they may misunderstand it, then there is no inseparable connexion in the *several Links* of this Chain.

And there is a further Fallacy in supposing that if any change in Faith happens, it must be as sudden and remarkable, as if all Men should *to day refuse to believe what they believed Yesterday*. Whereas the changes of Opinions are oft-times wrought by insensible Degrees, and many concurrent Causes ; and sometimes the very same Words may be used and the Faith altered, as in the Case of *Merit, Sacraments, Sacrifice*, &c. which sheweth Men may continue the very same Terms, and yet believe quite a different thing. And where Changes are gradual, it is very unreasonable to pitch upon such a precise and narrow space of time, as between *to Day* and *Yesterday*. By the same Method, one may demonstrate it to be impossible that any Language should be changed ; for People speak the same Language *to Day* which they *did Yesterday*.

and the same *Yesterday which they did the Day before*, and so up to the very building of *Babel*; and yet we all know that Languages are continually changed, and to such a degree, that in some Ages they cannot understand, what was at that time intelligible by all. In such cases, it is enough to assign the general Causes and Reasons of Alterations without fixing a precise and determinate Time. And those I shall speak to afterwards.

III. *And so up to the time of our Blessed Saviour.*
To prove any thing from hence it must be shewed,

I. That there can be no Pretence to Tradition taken up without Ground; for if there may, it can by no means follow, That if Men pretend to Tradition, that Tradition must run up to the Time of Christ.

But then they cease to be Traditionary Christians. What then? Not in pretence, for they may call themselves so still; but in reality they are not.

II. That if Men lay claim to a Rule they must always observe it. We do not pretend to it as to the Scripture: And what Reason is there for it as to Tradition? But if Men may pretend to follow *Tradition*, and do not, then from their being *Traditionary Christians*, it can by no means follow that this Tradition must be carried up to the Time of our *Blessed Saviour*.

II. The second Proposition is, *And if they follow this Rule, they can never err in Faith. This is palpably self evident*, saith J. S. So say I too, but it is only to be a meer Fallacy.

To follow this Rule is to believe the same to Day which they did Yesterday, and so up to Christ, or downwards : If they did this from Christs time, and so forwards, they must continue to believe the same to the End of the World.

If they really believe the same Doctrine which Christ taught, no doubt they cannot err. But the Question is, Whether this be an Infallible Rule for us to Judge, they could never mistake in this Rule, nor follow any other : For if either of these could happen, the Demonstration is lost. If it were possible for Errors to come in some other Way, or for Persons to misapprehend the Doctrine delivered ; then it is not possible for us by this Way to be convinced they could not err. The latter I have already spoken to ; I shall now shew that there were some other ways that Errors might come in. And here I shall pass over the *Common Infirmities of Human Nature*, which I think *Oral Tradition* can never Cure, and which leave Men always lyable to Error ; but I shall name some more particular *Ways* of introducing them.

I. By the *Authority of False Teachers*. And for this I shall not run back to the *False Apostles* and *Seducers* in the *Apostles* times and afterwards ; but I shall bring a present Instance in the *Church of Rome* ; and that is of *Michael de Molinos*, a Person solemnly condemned at *Rome*, *Aug. 28.* of this Year for *68 Propositions* taken out of his Books and owned by himself, as the Decree saith ; which are there said to be *Heretical, Erroneous, Blasphemous, Offensive, Rash, Seditious, and contrary to Christian Discipline*. This Man is said to have had *Thousands of Disciples in Italy*, in the very Heart of the *Traditionary Church*.
Now,

Now, I desire J. S. to inform me, If *Tradition* be *Infallible*, and that be the Way followed in the *Church of Rome*, how it was possible for such Multitudes to be deceived in Matters of such Consequence? To say they were not deceived, is to expose the Authority of the Guides of the Church of *Rome* to the greatest Contempt; To say they were deceived, is to own, That notwithstanding *Tradition*, a single Priest may gain such *Authority*, as to deceive *Thousands*; and where lies then the *Infallibility* of *Tradition*?

Euseb. l. 5.

c. 3.

c. 14.

c. 28.

l. 7. c. 31.

Theod. l. 1.

c. 4. l. 2.

II. By *Enthusiasm*, or a Pretence to *Immediate Revelation*. For this I shall not produce the Old Instances in *Ecclesiastical History*, as of *Montanus*, *Aclepiades*, *Theodotus*, *Manichæus*, *Arius*, *Aëtius*, &c. who all pretended to Revelations for their particular Opinions. But I shall keep to the late Instance of *Molinos*, who asserts, That the Perfection of a Christian State lies in a *Simple, Pure, Infused and Perfect Contemplation*, above the Use of *Ratiocination* or *Discursive Prayer*, and that in order to this, nothing is so necessary as *Self-annihilation*. This Doctrine is now condemned at *Rome*; but how came it into the Church; Did not they believe the same to Day which they did Yesterday? If there were *Oral Tradition* for it, how came it to be condemned? If not, then notwithstanding *Oral Tradition*, dangerous Doctrines may get in under a pretence of a more *Sublime* and *Spiritual Way* of *Perfection*, than is to be attained in the *Dull and Heavy Way* of *Tradition from Father to Son*.

III. By a Pretence to a more *Secret Tradition*. And thus *Christianity* was at first corrupted, by such as pretended

pretended that there was a *Mystical Doctrine* delivered by *Christ* of a more purifying Nature, than the Plain and Common Doctrine taught to all People by the *Apostles*. So *Hegesippus* in *Eusebius* affirms, That *Euseb. l. 3. c. 32. l. 4. c. 22.* the Christian Church was corrupted by this Means; and to the same Purpose *Irenaeus*. So that Tradition was so far from securing the Church from Error, that it was the Means of bringing it in. And the *Publick Tradition* could not hinder this coming in of Error, because the *Secret Tradition* was pretended to be more Divine and Spiritual; the other was only for *Babes*, and this for *grown Christians*.

IV. By Differences among Church-Guides about the Sense of Scripture and Tradition. Thus it was in the *Samosatenian, Arian, Pelagian, Nestorian, and Eutychian Controversies*. Neither of the Parties disowned Scripture or Tradition; and those who were justly condemned, pretended still to adhere to both. And if such Flames could not be prevented, so much nearer the *Apostles Times*, by the help of Tradition, What Reason can there be to expect it so long after?

V. By too great a Veneration to some particular Teachers, not far from the Apostolical Times, in regard to their Learning or Piety; which made their Disciples despise Tradition in Comparison of their Notions. And thus *Origen's* Opinions came to prevail so much in the Church; and the Mixture of *Platonism* with *Christianity* proved the occasion of several Errors, with Respect to the State of Souls after Death, as well as in other Points.

VI. The

VI. By *Compliance* with some *Gentile Superstitions* in Hopes to gain more easily upon the Minds of the People ; who having been long accustomed to the *Worship* of *Images* and *Tutelar Deities*, it was thought no Imprudent Thing in some Guides of the *Church*, when the main *Doctrines* of *Paganism* were renounced, to humour the People in these things ; so they were *Accommodated* to *Christianity* ; but others vehemently opposed this Method, as repugnant to the True Primitive Christianity. But by Degrees, those *Superstitions* prevailed ; and the *Original Tradition* of the Church thereby corrupted.

VII. By *Implicit Faith* ; which puts it into the Power of the *Church-Guides* to introduce what *Doctrines* they thought fit. When the best of the People were told it was against the *Fundamental Rights* of the *Catholick Church* for them to examine any *Opinions* which were proposed to them by their Guides, *That they neither did, nor could, nor ought to understand them* ; and when once this Point was gained, People never troubled themselves about *Scripture* or *Tradition* ; for all they had to do, was only to know what was decreed by the Church, though with a *Non-obstante* to a Divine Institution ; as is plain in the *Council of Constance*, notwithstanding all the Tricks to avoid it.

If then, *Errours* might come into the Church all these ways, what a vain thing is it to pretend, That *Oral Tradition* will keep from any possibility of Error ?

And so I need give no other Answer to his last Proposition, *That if Men did innovate in Faith, it must be either through Forgetfulness or Malice* ; for

I have shewed many *other Causes* besides these; especially since I intend to shew in a particular Discourse how the *Errors* and *Corruptions* we charge on the Church of Rome did come into it: My design here being only to shew the *Possibility* of it.

There remain only two things which deserve any Consideration: 1. About the Charge of *Pelagianism*. 2. About the *Council of Trent's* Proceeding on *Tradition*; which will admit of an easie Dispatch.

I. As to the Charge of *Pelagianism*. It doth not lie in this, *That he requires any Rational Inducements to Faith*, which we do assert as well as he. But it lay in these Two things.

I. That a *Divine Faith* was to be resolved into a *Natural Infallibility*. For we were told that *Divine Faith must have Infalible Grounds*; and when we come to examine them, we find nothing but what is *Natural*. And now to avoid the Charge of *Pelagianism*, this *Divine Faith* is declared to be *meer Human Faith*; and so *Human Faith* is said to have *Infalible Grounds*, but *Divine Faith* must shift for it self. For saith J. S. 'Tis confess'd and ever was, that the *Human Authority of the Church or Tradition*, begets only *Human Faith as its Immediate Effect*; but by bringing it up to *Christ*, it leads us to *what's Divine*. Well; but what *Infalible Ground* is there for this *Divine Faith*? Where doth that fix? Is it on the *Infallibility of Tradition* or not? If not, then we may have *Divine Faith* without it. If it doth, then *Divine Faith* is to be resolved into *Natural Means*: And what is this but *Pelagianism*?

II. That

Faith Vin-
dicated,
P. 155.

Page 157.

II. *That he excludes the Pious Disposition of the Will, from piecing out (as he calls it) the Defect of the Reasons why we Believe.* And in another place he excludes the Wills Assistance in these words, *That Faith, or a Firm and Immoveable Assent upon Authority is not thoroughly Rational, and by consequence partly Faulty, if the Motives be not alone able to convince an Understanding rightly disposed without the Wills Assistance.* How then can a *pious Disposition* of the *Will* be necessary in order to the Act of Faith? And is it not *Pelagianism* to exclude it?

Page 27.

Therefore I was in the right, when I said, That this way of *Oral Tradition* resolves all into a *meer Human Faith*; and that this is the unavoidable Consequence of it. No, he saith, *he resolves all into Christs and the Apostles teaching.* How ridiculous is this? For, did not *Pelagius* and *Cælestius* the very same? And the thing I charged upon them, was, That they went no farther upon this Principle than they did. Upon this he asks a very impertinent Question; but if I do not Answer it, I know what Clamours will follow. *Pray do you hold that Christ is a meer Man, or that Believing him is a meer Human Faith, or that the Doctrine taught by Him or Them is meerly Human?* What Occasion have I given for such a Question? But I perceive there is a design among some, to make me be believed to be no Christian. I pray God forgive the *Malice* of such Men. I thank God, I have better Grounds for my *Faith* than *Oral Tradition*. I do believe Christ to be more than *meer Man*, even the *Eternal Son of God*, and that his *Doctrine* is *Divine*, and his *Apostles* had *Infallible Assistance* in delivering it.

it. But what is all this to the present Question? I perceive some men when they are hard pinched, cry out, that their Adversaries are *Atheists* or *Soci-nians*, &c. and hope by this means to divert them from the business before them. But these Arts will not do. And such a Dust cannot so blind the Readers Eyes, but he must see it is raised on purpose, that he may not be discerned in making an Escape.

II. As to the *Council of Trent* proceeding upon *Tradition*. That which I said, was, The Church of *Rome* hath no where declared in Council, that it hath any such Power of making *Implicit Articles of Faith* contained in *Scripture* to become *Explicit* by its explaining the Sense of them. And the Reason I gave, was, Because the *Church of Rome* doth not pretend to make *New Articles of Faith*: But to make *Implicit Doctrines* to become *Explicit*, is really so to do; as I there proved. Now what saith *J. S.* to this?

I. He saith, *That the Council of Trent defines it belongs to the Church to judge of the True Sense and Interpretation of Scripture.* As though all that belonged to the Church, must presently belong to the Church of *Rome*; or all Judgment of *Scripture* must be *Infallible*; or must make things *necessary to be believed* which were not so before.

II. He shews, *That the Church did proceed upon this Power.* What Power? Of making things not Necessary to become Necessary?

I. It declares Sess. 13. *That from some Texts mentioned, the Church was ever persuaded of the Doctrine of*

Transubstantiation. This is an admirable Argument, to prove, that it can make that Necessary to be believed, which was not, because it was always believed.

II. Sess. 14. *It declares 1 Cor. 11. to be understood of Sacramental Confession by the Custom and Practise of the Church.* Then I suppose the Church thought it Necessary before.

III. Sess. 14. *It declares Jam. 5. to be understood of Sacramental Confession.* But how? By its Power of making it Necessary to be believed meerly by such Declaration? No; but by *Apostolical Tradition*; then the meaning is, that it was always so understood.

But because the *Council of Trent* doth pretend to *Apostolical Tradition* for the Points there determin'd, and the shewing that it had not *Catholick* and *Apostolick Tradition*, is the most effectual Confutation of the present Pretence of *Oral Tradition*, I shall reserve that to another Discourse, part whereof, I hope, will suddenly be Published.

F I N I S.

A CATALOGUE of some BOOKS Printed for Henry Mortlock, at the Phoenix in S. Paul's Church-Yard.

A Rational Account of the Grounds of Protestant Religion; being a Vindication of the Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury's* Relation of a Conference, &c. from the pretended Answer by *T. C.* Wherein the True Grounds of Faith are cleared, and the False discovered; the Church of *England* vindicated from the Imputation of Schism; and the most important particular Controversie between us and those of the Church of *Rome* thoroughly examined: By *Edward Stillingfleet*, D. D. and Dean of *S. Pauls*, Folio, the Second Edition.

Origines Britannica: Or the Antiquity of the *British Churches*; with a Preface concerning some pretended Antiquities relating to *Britain*, in vindication of the Bishop of *S. Asaph*, by *Edward Stillingfleet* D. D. Dean of *S. Pauls*, Folio.

The Rule of Faith: Or an Answer to the Treatise of Mr. *J. S.* entitled, *Sure footing*, &c. by *John Tillotson*, D. D. to which is adjoyned, A Reply to Mr. *J. S.*'s third Appendix, &c. by *Edward Stillingfleet* D. D.

A Letter to Mr. *G.* giving a true Account of a late Conference at the D. of *P's*.

A second Letter to Mr. *G.* in answer to two Letters lately published concerning the Conference at the D. of *P.*

Veteres Vindicati: In an Expostulatory Letter to Mr. *Sclater* of *Putney*, upon his *Consensus Veterum*, &c. wherein the absurdity of his Method, and the weakness of his Reasons are shewn; His false Aspersions upon the Church *England* are wiped off, and her Faith concerning the Eucharist proved to be that of the Primitive Church: Together with Animadversions on Dean *Boileaus* French translation of, and Remarks upon *Bertram*.

An Answer to the Compiler of *Nubes Testium*: Wherein is shewn That Antiquity (in relation to the Points in Controversie set down by

A CATALOGUE of BOOKS.

by him) did not for the first five hundred Years Believe, Teach and Practice as the Church of *Rome* doth at present Believe, Teach and Practice; together with a Vindication of *Veteres Vindicati* from the late weak and disingenuous Attempts of the Author of Transubstantiation Defended by the Author of the Answer to Mr. *Sclater* of *Putney*.

A Letter to Father *Lewis Sabran* Jesuite, in answer to his Letter to a Peer of the Church of *England*; wherein the Postscript to the Answer to the *Nubes Testium* is Vindicated, and Father *Sabrans* Mistakes further discovered.

A second Letter to Father *Lewis Sabran* Jesuite, in answer to his Reply.

A Vindication of the Principles of the Author of the Answer to the Compiler of *Nubes Testium* in answer to a late pretended Letter from a Dissenter to the Divines of the Church of *England*.

Scripture and Tradition Compared, in a Sermon preached at *Guild-Hall-Chappel*, Nov. 27. 1687. by *Edward Stillingfleet* D. D. Dean of *S. Pauls*, the second Edition.

There is now in the Press, and will speedily be published,

An Historical Examination of the Authority of Councils, discovering the false Dealing that hath been used in the publishing of them, and the Difference amongst the Papists themselves about their Number.
